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The Effect of Additional Child Support Income on the Risk of Child Maltreatment

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ABSTRACT About 6 million children were reported to the child welfare system as being at risk of child abuse or neglect in the United States in 2010. Researchers and policy makers have long recognized that children living in families with limited economic resources are at higher risk for maltreatment than children from higher socioeconomic strata, but the causal effect of income, and particularly child support, on maltreatment risk has been challenging to establish; many of the same factors are associated with child support payment levels, poverty, and child maltreatment risk. Using a random assignment experiment that led to exogenous differences in child support received, the present analysis explores the causal role of a full pass-through and disregard of child support on the risk of child maltreatment. We find that a full child support pass-through, as compared to a partial pass-through, reduces the risk of child maltreatment.

INTRODUCTION

The public child welfare system, which encompasses child protective services, foster care, and permanency planning (e.g., adoption or subsidized guardianship), plays an essential role in American social policy. The country is characterized by many analysts as providing relatively modest supports for children, leaving their parents with great responsibility and discretion in their caregiving role (Rainwater and Smeeding 2005; Gornick and Meyers 2005). However, the child welfare system allows extensive public intervention when children are deemed to be at risk due to abuse or ne-

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glect. In 2010, reports involving approximately 6 million children were made to the child welfare system (US Department of Health and Human Services 2012), and direct public expenditures in response to child abuse and neglect are estimated to be over $25 billion annually (Scarcella 2006). Furthermore, some have argued that child maltreatment has consequences beyond childhood and may affect educational and employment outcomes, mental and physical health, relationship quality, and antisocial and criminal behavior (Corso et al. 2008; Gilbert et al. 2009; Currie and Widom 2010; Mersky and Topitzes 2010; Currie and Tekin 2012; Jonson-Reid, Kohl, and Drake 2012).[1] The compelling need to protect vulnerable children, as well as more prosaic concerns regarding public expenditures, motivates our interest in identifying the underlying risk factors and effective approaches to prevent child maltreatment.

Researchers and policy makers have long recognized that children living in families with limited economic resources are at a higher risk for maltreatment than children from higher socioeconomic strata (Gil 1970; Wolock and Horowitz 1979; Pelton 1981, 1994; Berger and Waldfogel 2011). The causal effect of income on maltreatment risk, however, is unknown. Because many factors, such as poor parental mental health, are associated with an elevated risk both of poverty and child maltreatment, teasing out the causal role of income is challenging. Practical and ethical issues preclude experimental testing of many of the factors shown to be associated with maltreatment risk. However, using a random assignment experiment that led to exogenous differences in child support received, we are able to explore the causal impact on the risk of child maltreatment of a full pass-through and disregard of child support. Mothers randomly assigned to the experimental group had all current child support paid on behalf of their children passed-through (rather than retained by the government) and disregarded in calculating welfare benefits. We also consider alternative pathways that may link a full pass-through to the risk of the child welfare system involvement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The association between poverty and child maltreatment is repeatedly demonstrated in the research literature (Gil 1970; Wolock and Horowitz 1979;

1. If child maltreatment has a causal effect on the risk of later poor outcomes, the costs to society are much larger. According to one recent study, the total lifetime economic costs

Pelton 1981, 1994; Russell and Trainor 1984; Trickett et al. 1991; Jones and McCurdy 1992; Bath and Haapala 1993; Drake and Pandey 1996; Sedlak and Broadhurst 1996; Sedlak et al. 2010, 2011). Large-scale, cross-sectional studies of the general population, such as the National Incidence Studies (NIS; Sedlak and Broadhurst 1996; Sedlak et al. 2010) and the National Family Violence Surveys (Gelles 1992; Berger 2004) find an inverse association between income and measures of child maltreatment. For example, families deemed to have low socioeconomic status in the NIS-4 are five times more likely to experience child maltreatment than families of higher socioeconomic status (Sedlak et al. 2010). The relationship between income and child maltreatment is less consistent in studies of high-risk (primarily low-income) populations, where variance in family income is constricted. Several such studies fail to find an association between income and child welfare system involvement (Slack et al. 2003, 2004), while others demonstrate that income is inversely associated with maltreatment reports, even after adjusting for potentially confounding factors (Shook 1999; Cox, Kotch, and Everson 2003; McDaniel and Slack 2005; Nam, Meezan, and Danziger 2006). Other studies show that income loss (as opposed to income level) increases the risk of child welfare system involvement (Shook 1999; Slack, Lee, and Berger 2007). For example, using fixed-effects methods, Kristen Slack and colleagues (2007) find that when welfare benefit reductions are not offset by other income sources (e.g., earnings, food stamps), the risk of being reported to the child welfare system increases.

The extant literature further demonstrates that child maltreatment risk is associated with various indicators of economic hardship, including welfare receipt (Jones and McCurdy 1992; Brown et al. 1998; Needell et al. 1999; Martin and Lin 2003), unemployment (Gillham et al. 1998; Sidebotham, Heron, and Golding 2002), and single-parent family structure (Gelles 1992; Chaffin, Kelleher, and Hollenberg 1996; Sedlack and Broadhurst 1996; Berger 2005; Mersky et al. 2009). Within high-risk populations, hardships such as utility shutoffs, difficulty paying for housing, food insecurity, and self-reported material economic stress are shown to be associated with increased risk of child welfare system involvement (Epstein 2002; Slack et al. 2003, 2004, 2007; Courtney et al. 2005; Dworsky, Courtney, and Zinn 2007; Yang 2012). Furthermore, some studies show a cor-

in response to child abuse and neglect in 2008 are estimated to be approximately $124 billion (Fang et al. 2012).

relation between child maltreatment and community- or state-level poverty rates (Coulton et al. 1995, 2007; Drake and Pandey 1996), unemployment rates (Jones 1990), and welfare receipt rates and benefit levels (Paxson and Waldfogel 2002).

Various mechanisms have been proposed to explain observed associations between poverty and child maltreatment (Pelton 1994; Drake and Pandey 1996; Shook 1999; Paxson, Berger, and Waldfogel 2002; Berger 2007; Jonson-Reid, Drake, and Kohl 2009). One hypothesis is that poverty may reduce a parent's ability to provide for a child's most basic necessities (e.g., food, shelter, medical care). Alternatively, economic hardships may lead to changes in parental mental health, caregiving behaviors, or family dynamics that in turn pose a threat to child safety and well-being. Another hypothesis is that certain indicators of poverty may increase the visibility and scrutiny of low-income families to potential maltreatment reporters. For example, welfare participants may have greater exposure to mandatory reporters, such as case workers. It should be noted that the visibility hypothesis is particularly relevant for studies that rely upon official records of abuse and neglect reports to operationalize child maltreatment. Finally, it is also possible that selection accounts for associations between income or poverty status and child maltreatment, in that certain characteristics may increase the chances of being poor, as well as engaging in abusive or neglectful behavior toward one's children.

Taken together, the existing evidence compels the question of whether income plays a causal role in the etiology of child maltreatment. Prior research, however, has only been able to assess the correlation. To our knowledge, there is no experimental evaluation that explores the causal role of income on child maltreatment.[2] To contribute to efforts to address this gap in knowledge, we test the effect of a full pass-through and disregard of child support, which increased child support income, on the risk of child welfare system involvement using a randomized experimental evaluation.

POLICY CONTEXT AND THE ORIGINAL CHILD SUPPORT DEMONSTRATION EVALUATION

The 1996 welfare reform led to broad changes in income support policy as states responded to the elimination of the entitlement to cash assistance

2. A Title IV-A waiver demonstration in Delaware (Fein and Lee 2003) did find evidence that the combination of welfare reform policies implemented in that state increased the rate

and to a new block grant–funded, time-limited, and work-focused Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The State of Wisconsin had a history of welfare policy innovation; starting in the late 1980s, it successfully sought waivers from federal welfare requirements and tested a number of alternative program features (Kaplan 2000; Mead 2004). When TANF gave states more flexibility with regard to their cash assistance program, Wisconsin implemented the Wisconsin-Works (W-2) program, which was among the most intensive of all state TANF programs in its work focus. W-2 benefit administration was designed to mimic regular employment along a number of dimensions. For example, W-2 benefits are not adjusted for family size (just as wages in regular employment generally do not vary explicitly with the worker's number of children), and benefits are reduced for each hour of mandated activities missed (just as earnings are generally tied directly to hours worked).

A unique aspect of Wisconsin's welfare reform was the full pass-through and disregard of child support paid on behalf of families receiving W-2 benefits; mothers (except those in the control group) received all the current child support paid on behalf of their children without any reduction in their W-2 cash benefits. This policy was consistent with the core philosophy of W-2; W-2 cash benefits were not reduced when child support was collected (just as employers do not reduce wages if an employee receives child support). However, because child support paid to TANF recipients is generally retained and used by both state and federal governments to offset welfare costs, the policy required a federal waiver. As a condition of the waiver, the federal government required a random assignment evaluation.

The original Child Support Demonstration Evaluation (CSDE) was implemented statewide in 1997–98, during which time all TANF participants were randomly assigned to either a full pass-through and disregard group or a partial pass-through and disregard group. For those in the experimental group, every dollar of current child support paid by the nonresident father was passed on to the mother, and the child support was disregarded in determining her TANF cash benefit.[3] For example, a mother

of involvement with the child welfare system for reasons of child neglect. The experimental black box, however, did not afford an assessment of whether changes in income per se were responsible for this finding.

3. Both child support and TANF rules distinguish resident parents (those who live with their children) and nonresident parents (those who do not live with their children). In most

in the experimental group receiving a cash benefit of $673 per month, and also due $200 per month in child support, could receive a total of $873 in child support and TANF.[4] In contrast, those assigned to the control group received the greater of $50, or 41 percent of child support paid. A mother in the control group with a cash benefit of $673 who is receiving child support of $200 would receive a total of $755 in child support and TANF (because only 41 percent of $200, or $82, of child support would be passed-through and disregarded).

The original CSDE included an implementation analysis and extensive quantitative evaluation of the success of random assignment. Families were assigned to the experimental and control groups based on a randomly distributed digit of the mother's Social Security number, which was not subject to manipulation. Subsequent analysis of the preassignment characteristics of families assigned to the experimental and control groups further confirmed the success of random assignment and support a straightforward interpretation of differences in subsequent outcomes (Cancian, Caspar, and Meyer 2001).

Families in the experimental group received more child support as a mechanical effect of the policy; however, assignment only affected resources for those receiving TANF cash benefits and child support in the same month. Because TANF participation in Wisconsin tended to be short, and child support receipt among TANF participants irregular, differences in total income were fairly modest. Among families with nonmarital children, those in the experimental group received an average of $101 more child support in the first year of the experiment and $102 more in the

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cases there is no explicit policy of differential treatment of mothers and fathers. However, most children receiving TANF benefits are born to unmarried parents, and children born to unmarried parents usually live with their mother and much less often with their father. In the analysis that follows, we restrict our sample to nonmarital children living with their mother.

4. W-2 participants may be assigned to a number of different tiers, depending in part on their work history and current barriers to employment. The lower tiers pay a cash stipend. These include community service jobs, which provide a monthly cash payment of $673 for full participation, and the W-2 transitions tier, designed for those with greater barriers to employment and providing monthly cash payments of $628. "Caretaker of newborn" benefits, available to mothers of children less than 12 weeks of age, also provide $628 per month. Upper-tier placements typically involve only case management services and do not include a cash stipend. Those in an upper-tier placement were not subject to having child support diverted, regardless of their experimental or control status.

second year; among those with a child support order at assignment, the amounts were $180 and $174.[5] While the difference in income is fairly modest, it provides an opportunity to test the causal effects of an increase in child-support income on child maltreatment.

DATA AND METHOD

We rely on administrative data collected as part of the original CSDE evaluation for our measures of experimental status and other control variables (see Cancian, Meyer, and Caspar 2008 for more details). We measure child welfare system involvement with newly available historical administrative data. Specifically, from the Wisconsin Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (WiSACWIS), we determine if any of the mothers' children were the alleged victims in a screened-in (i.e., investigated) child abuse or neglect report.[6] When the child welfare agency receives a report of potential child abuse or neglect (typically from a mandated reporter, such as a teacher or social service provider), allegations "deemed as rising to the level of maltreatment or threat of maltreatment as defined by Wisconsin statutes" are screened-in for assessment (State of Wisconsin 2010, 12).

We limit our analysis to 13,062 mothers of nonmarital children in the original CSDE sample who entered W-2 during the first 10 months of Wisconsin's TANF program, beginning in September 1997.[7] We track these

5. In addition to the mechanical effect, the evaluation also found statistically significant behavioral differences for the experimental group, including increases in the proportion of fathers paying any support and the amount of support paid (see Cancian et al. 2008). In the Conclusions section, we discuss the potential implications for our analysis of other effects of the experiment.

6. Wisconsin's conversion to a new automated data system in the early 2000s resulted in only some historical data being retained. Information on substantiated reports or report allegation categories was rendered unreliable. In the mid- to late 1990s in Wisconsin, approximately 30 to 40 percent of screened-in cases were ultimately substantiated (Bureau of Programs and Policies 1999), suggesting that a sizable percentage of screened-in cases involving maltreatment were deemed to have occurred. Additionally, a range of safety services are regularly provided to families in cases involving unsubstantiated reports of maltreatment. Thus, screened-in reports reflect situations that require the child welfare system to take further action, and the associated costs of these additional steps have implications for this analysis.

7. We excluded 346 mothers whose youngest child was over 16 years old or who did not have a child at baseline.

mothers in the administrative data for a period of 2 years from the time that they entered W-2 and were assigned to the experimental (full child support) or control (partial child support) group.

Our basic approach is to compare the experimental and control group members with regard to the rate of screened-in reports of child maltreatment. If additional child support income reduces the likelihood of child abuse and neglect, we should observe lower rates of maltreatment reports among the experimental group than among the control group. While a simple comparison of report rates of experimental and control group members is a valid test given successful random assignment, we follow previous research and also report findings controlling for a limited set of observable characteristics measured at the time of assignment. Logistic regressions control for differences in the characteristics of sample members at W-2 entry (that presumably occurred by chance; see Meyer and Cancian 2001). In addition, we control for a limited number of other variables measured at the time of initial assignment. To the extent that these control variables account for variance in our outcome, we may be more likely to discern the effect of the experiment (Bloom 2006).

Table 1 provides the distribution of our primary outcomes and control variables. The first row shows the frequencies for our outcome variable; in our sample, 20 percent of mothers had a child subject to a screened-in child maltreatment report in the 2 years following group assignment. The mothers in our sample were mostly young (about half were age 25 or younger), two-thirds were black, and 79 percent lived in Milwaukee County, the largest metropolitan area in Wisconsin. Most of the mothers (60 percent) had a child under 3 years of age, and a third had more than two children. The majority of the sample had low levels of education: 55 percent did not have a high school degree upon entering the W-2 program. Also, most mothers had a history of welfare receipt (over half received welfare assistance in at least 18 of 24 months prior to entering W-2) as well as employment (80 percent had some earnings recorded in the Unemployment Insurance system in the past 2 years). Just over 60 percent of mothers were assigned to a lower W-2 tier such as a transitional or community service job. Sixteen percent of mothers had legally established paternity for their children with two or more fathers. One-third of the mothers either did not have a legally established father of any of their children or no established father had any record of earnings in the past 2 years. While most mothers (57 percent) had a child support order

TABLE 1. Characteristics of the Sample (Weighted)

	Valid %
Child welfare involvement:	
Screened-in report in year 1 or 2	19.9
Experimental or control group status:	
Experimental	50.4
Control	49.6
Race:	
White (non-Hispanic)	21.3
Black (non-Hispanic)	67.7
Hispanic	7.2
Other	3.8
Education:	
Less than high school	55.3
High school	36.2
More than high school	8.5
Mother's age (years):	
17–25	52.5
26–30	20.0
31 or more	27.5
Age of youngest child (years):	
0–2	60.5
3–5	18.3
6–16	21.2
No. of children:	
1	36.2
2	29.5
3 or more	34.3
No. of (legally established) fathers:	
None	28.4
1	55.2
2	16.4
Residence:	
Milwaukee County	78.6
Other	21.4
AFDC receipt in 24 months before assignment:	
None	11.1
1–18 months	32.4
19–24 months	56.5
W-2 program at assignment:	
Lower tier	61.3
Caretaker of newborn	9.3
Upper tier	29.4
Employment in 8 quarters before assignment:	
None	19.9
1–6 quarters	61.3
7–8 quarters	18.8
Child support order at baseline:	
Yes	57.3
Child support paid on behalf of family in year before assignment:	
None	69.8
$1–$999	15.8
$1,000 or more	14.4
Fathers' annualized earnings in 8 quarters before assignment:	
No legal nonresident parent	9.8
$0	18.8
$1–$15,000	59.3
$15,000 or more	12.1

Note.—The proportion of each variable excludes missing values for some variables (63 for race, 138 for education, and 2 for mother's age). Number of mothers = 13,062.

at baseline, only 14 percent had a history of substantial child support payments on their behalf (i.e., more than $1,000 in the prior 12 months). Overall, our sample largely included women with substantial family responsibilities and limited earnings potential. Although many had little or no history of child support receipt, we would expect additional income to be potentially important given resource constraints.

RESULTS

Our measures of the relationship between experimental status and a screened-in report of child maltreatment are shown in table 2, which reports the odds ratios from logistic regression models. The first column shows the results of a simple logistic regression with only experimental status. The second column shows the results when we add controls for those variables that differed (by chance) between the experimental and control groups. The final column adds additional controls measured at the time of assignment. In each case, we find that mothers in the experimental group, who therefore received more child support income, are less likely to have a child subject to a screened-in report for child maltreatment ($p < .05$). The experimental group is estimated to be about 10 percent less likely (i.e., an odds ratio of .88 to .89) than the control group to have a screened-in maltreatment report. With about 20 percent of families having a child with a screened-in report, this means that families eligible to receive all the child support paid on their behalf are estimated to be about 2 percentage points less likely to have a screened-in report than families who receive partial child support payments.

The other results reported in table 2 are largely as anticipated. Considering the final model, we see that mothers with larger families and with younger children are more likely to have a child with a screened-in report. Mothers who had children (with legally established paternity) with more than one father are also at greater risk, though the coefficient is marginally significant ($p < .10$). Mothers who did not have a high school degree are more likely to become involved with the child welfare system than mothers with at least a high school degree. Mothers who received Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in the past are also more likely to have a child reported to the child welfare system than mothers who did not receive AFDC. We note that in the regression with lim-

ited controls (col. 2), non-Hispanic black mothers are more likely to have children with a screened-in report, but the relationship is reversed when we control for other variables, particularly location in Milwaukee. This suggests that the overrepresentation of non-Hispanic black children among screened-in reports may be attributed to other characteristics associated with race.

SENSITIVITY TESTS

A series of alternative models test the sensitivity of our estimates to changes in specification. Our base model estimated the effect of experimental status on the probability of any screened-in report at any time in the first 2 years for the full sample. Measuring child welfare involvement in only the first year yields similar results to those reported in table 2. We also estimated the effect of additional child support income on the number of screened-in reports over the first 2 years, rather than the simple dichotomous variable noting any reports. Again, the results are consistent with those reported in table 2. Experimental group status reduces the number of screened-in reports. The relationships between number of reports and other variables are also generally similar, although there are some differences in the relationships that are statistically significant at conventional levels.[8]

We also estimated our baseline model for subgroups that were potentially more affected by the experiment (Cancian et al. 2008): those with a history of having child support paid on behalf of their children, those new to the welfare system (who appear to be more sensitive to the policy change associated with the experiment), those with less than a high school education (for whom any extra support might be particularly important, given limited earnings potential), and those both new to welfare and with less than a high school education. These subgroups are all defined

8. In contrast to the results of a model of any reports (table 2), when we estimate the factors associated with the number of screened-in reports, other race or ethnicity, the number of legally established fathers, and having a child support order at entry are no longer statistically significant at conventional levels, while having a high school degree and entering in the "caretaker of newborns" tier is significant. These differences do not alter our basic results regarding the negative relationship between child support received and any, or the number of, screened-in reports.

TABLE 2. Odds Ratios from Logistic Regression Models Predicting Screened-in Child Maltreatment Reports

	Models		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Experimental group	.892**	.879**	.881**
	(.048)	(.048)	(.050)
Race/ethnicity:			
White (ref)			
Black		1.570***	.734***
		(.099)	(.065)
Hispanic			.613***
			(.083)
Other			.535***
			(.103)
Education:			
More than high school (ref)			
Less than high school			1.521***
			(.178)
High school			1.031
			(.126)
Mother's age (years):			
16–25 (ref)			
26–30			1.335***
			(.111)
31 or more		1.456***	1.514***
		(.086)	(.130)
Age of youngest child (years):			
0–2 (ref)			
3–5			.849**
			(.069)
6–16			.750***
			(.067)
No. of children:			
1 (ref)			
2			1.906***
			(.163)
More than 3			3.568***
			(.313)
No. of legally established fathers:			
None (ref)			
1			1.142*
			(.088)
More than 2			1.203*
			(.124)
Milwaukee County			3.363***
			(.385)
AFDC receipt in 24 months before assignment:			
None (ref)			
1–18 months			1.312**
			(.174)
19–24 months			1.279*
			(.179)
W-2 program at assignment:			
Upper tier (ref)			
Lower tier			1.391***
			(.097)
Caretaker of newborn			1.220
			(.166)

TABLE 2 (*continued*)

	Models		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Employment in 8 quarters before assignment:			
None (ref)			
1–6 quarters			1.044
			(.075)
7–8 quarters			.916
			(.093)
Child support order at entry			.824**
			(.063)
CS payment in year before assignment:			
None (ref)			
$1–$999			1.144
			(.097)
$1,000 or more		1.110	1.042
		(.085)	(.101)
$15,000 plus nonresident fathers' earnings			1.003
			(.094)

Note.—Ref = reference; AFDC = Aid to Families with Dependent Children; CS = child support. Number of mothers = 13,062.

* $p < .10$.

** $p < .05$.

*** $p < .01$.

by preassignment (e.g., exogenous) characteristics. In each case, the coefficient estimates suggest a negative relationship between child welfare involvement and child support income, though as might be expected given limited sample size, the results for two of the four groups (those with child support history and those new to welfare) are not statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

Our results provide evidence that a full, as compared to a partial, pass-through and disregard of child support payments reduces the risk of child welfare involvement. Allowing families to fully benefit from child support payments, even while receiving welfare, may affect family well-being through a number of channels: facilitating timely paternity establishment, increasing payments, possibly even lessening family conflict (Meyer et al. 2001) and reducing new partnerships (Cancian and Meyer 2012). The most direct potential effect of the policy, however, is by increasing child support receipt and thus the income available to economically vulnerable families.

By taking advantage of an experimental study design leading to exogenous variation in child support income, this article provides supporting evidence of a causal effect of income on child maltreatment risk. The results from our analyses show that, even though the difference in child support income is modest, families in the experimental group are about 10 percent less likely than families in the control group to be screened-in for child maltreatment The full pass-through resulted in about a 2 percentage point reduction in being screened-in for maltreatment over the 2-year period—a modest but consequential difference.

This analysis has several limitations that are important to consider. First, our sample is limited to mothers of nonmarital children who participated in Wisconsin's TANF program in its first year of operation. We might expect any change in child support income to be particularly salient for these low-income and low-asset families. The relatively modest difference in the child support incomes of those in the experimental and control groups (about $100 per year) might be less likely to affect child maltreatment in a more advantaged sample. That said, an economically disadvantaged sample is of particular relevance given the overrepresentation of low-income families in the child welfare system.

The relatively modest difference in child support income can also be considered a limitation, given that many interventions might be expected to increase income more substantially. In part, the relatively small differences in child support incomes when comparing the experimental and control groups results from averaging over many families in both groups who received no child support—a necessary approach, given our fundamental reliance on the experimental variation for identification of the causal effect. Experimental status alters child support receipts only for those families with child support paid on their behalf and only then if they were simultaneously receiving cash welfare payments. While our approach does not allow us to condition on this status, it is noteworthy that the annual difference in child support receipts was over $400 for the subsample of families who simultaneously received child support and W-2. Thus, these are likely to be conservative estimates of the potential role of child support income in reducing child maltreatment among low-income families, though they are unique in providing strong causal evidence given the experimental design (for related nonexperiment evidence, see Cancian et al. 2012).

The variation in income that we exploit is due to differences in the treatment of child support. It is possible that child support has a particularly important effect on child well-being. It is also possible that other effects of the full pass-through and disregard contributed to the lower risk for families in the experimental group. For example, as noted above, families in the experimental group established paternity more quickly compared to those in the control group. Moreover, there is suggestive evidence that the full pass-through and disregard reduced conflict between parents by providing an incentive for parents to cooperate with the formal child support system since support paid by fathers through the full pass-through directly benefits their children (Meyer and Cancian 2001). If child support has a differential effect, or if other effects of the experiment contributed to lower rates of child maltreatment, then the results may not be due simply to the increased income of families in the experimental group.

In addition, the experimental design, which allows a causal interpretation of comparisons of outcomes for the experimental and control group, results in black box estimates of the effects. Because postassignment characteristics, from child support paid to subsequent fertility and family formation, are potentially endogenous, we are limited in our ability to explore the pathways for the change in child welfare outcomes. Future analysis of this and other policy experiments will be important in order to understand the mechanisms through which increases in child support income may work to reduce child welfare involvement. For example, recent analysis suggests that the additional income due to the full pass-through and disregard may have increased a mother's economic independence and reduced repartnering with men who were not the father of her children (Cancian and Meyer 2012). This might be expected to play a role in subsequent child welfare outcomes (Berger, Paxson, and Waldfogel 2009).

Finally, this study relied on a single indicator of child maltreatment: screened-in reports of abuse and neglect made to the child welfare system. It is possible that additional child support income has a different effect when predicting other markers of child welfare system involvement (e.g., initial reports, substantiated reports, foster care placements) or a differential role with respect to the type of abuse or neglect alleged in a report. To the extent that the visibility hypothesis plays a role in families' involvement in the child welfare system (families who are more visible to

the mandated reporters are more likely to be involved in the child welfare system), it is possible that income changes are tied to a greater or lesser likelihood of becoming known to a potential reporter. However, the fact that income changes in this analysis were not tied to the receipt of other benefits or involvement in other systems beyond W-2 makes this alternative explanation less compelling.

Notwithstanding these limitations, to our knowledge this article is the first attempt to use experimental data to identify exogenous increases in child support or other income as a protective factor for child welfare system involvement. Research is needed to expand upon these findings, particularly studies that can employ multiple measures of child maltreatment (e.g., parent report, interviewer observation, as well as child welfare system indicators) and research that can inform the mechanisms linking income changes to maltreatment risk.

CONCLUSIONS

The child welfare system provides a safety net of last resort for children. Policy makers and researchers have long recognized that low-income families are substantially more likely to come into contact with the system, but it has been difficult to identify a causal effect of income on the risk of child maltreatment. Many of the same factors, from poor mental health to residence in disadvantaged neighborhoods, are associated with both low-income and higher risk of maltreatment. In this article we exploit the exogenous variation in income due to a random assignment evaluation of child support and welfare reform to identify the causal relationship between increased child support income and the risk of child maltreatment. We find that mothers eligible to receive all child support paid on behalf of their children are less likely to have a child subject to a screened-in report of maltreatment than are mothers who are eligible for only partial child support payments.

Our findings highlight the importance of the current public policy debate regarding the potential for more generous income support policy to reduce child maltreatment. Furthermore, they hold implications for the design of interventions with populations at risk for becoming involved with the child welfare system. Changes in child support policy that provided modest increases in income within an economically disadvantaged population reduced the risk of a screened-in report of child maltreatment.

This suggests that child maltreatment prevention programs should pay explicit attention to policies in other service systems that may also help mitigate economic hardship among the families that they serve.

NOTE

Maria Cancian is professor of public affairs and social work, affiliate of the Institute for Research on Poverty, and associate dean for the College of Letters and Science at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She has a PhD in economics from the University of Michigan. Her research considers the relationship between economic status and family formation and the influence of related public policies. This article draws from data originally assembled for the Child Support Demonstration Evaluation (CSDE) and the TANF Integrated Data Project, both conducted at the Institute for Research on Poverty in cooperation with the Wisconsin Departments of Workforce Development (DWD) and Children and Families (DCF).

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Dismantling Policy through Fiscal Constriction: Examining the Erosion in State Unemployment Insurance Finances

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ABSTRACT A common proposition in welfare state research is that programs financed through dedicated payroll taxes tend to be more durable. This article examines American unemployment insurance (UI) as an exception to this proposition. UI is a self-financed social insurance program whose benefits have been dismantled over time because of an inability to maintain a constant revenue base. The study first examines the long-run decline in UI finances and concludes that changes in UI taxes are associated with the largest declines in state finances. It then examines why more states have not pursued reforms to strengthen UI finances and finds that opponents of more generous UI benefits have generally succeeded in preventing such measures, thus constricting UI finances and gradually retrenching benefits. These findings have implications for those seeking to improve UI solvency, as well as for the study of welfare state retrenchment more generally.

INTRODUCTION

What kinds of social policies are most resistant to retrenchment? One common conclusion in the welfare state literature is that programs financed through dedicated taxes, especially payroll taxes, are most likely to have politically sustainable and durable sources of revenue. This article examines the American unemployment insurance (UI) system as an example of a self-financed social insurance program whose benefits have eroded by an inability to maintain a constant base of revenue, despite being funded in this way. I show that this trend, which I call fiscal constriction, has been an important way that opponents of the program have retrenched UI benefits over time.

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Aside from being a theoretically interesting case, the federal-state UI system merits attention as an important part of the economic safety net for American workers. Unemployment benefits, including temporary expansions enacted by the federal government, are estimated to have kept 4.6 million Americans out of poverty in 2010 (Sherman 2011). At the same time, in mid-2011, state UI finances were at their weakest point since the passage of the Social Security Act in 1935 (Vroman 2011). Although the downturn that started in 2007 is responsible for much of the recent decline in solvency, in this article I explain how most states' UI finances were already weak going into the Great Recession as the result of deterioration over the past 40 years. Weak UI trust funds hamper the UI system's ability to provide economic security to workers and stabilization to the economy during downturns. Poor trust fund solvency also prevents legislators from enacting expansions that would otherwise be needed to keep UI benefits in line with changes in the economy and the labor force, like the growing number of low-wage and part-time workers who may have trouble accessing the program.

Using data from 1978 to 2008, this article first examines the correlates of the long-term erosion in state UI finances. Contrary to the claims of some observers of the system, I find that changes in UI taxes—rather than in economic conditions, claims, or benefit generosity—are associated with much of the variation in state UI finances over the program's history. In particular, I find that declines in the proportion of workers' wages subject to UI taxes have driven most of the erosion in solvency. In the second part of the article, I examine the political dynamics of UI, specifically the conditions under which states chose to enact reforms to improve UI solvency by indexing UI taxes to growth in workers' wages. Consistent with the theory that fiscal constriction has been an important strategy for retrenching UI benefits in the United States, I find that indexation was most likely when advocates of more generous UI benefits controlled the legislative process, when those advocates could draw on supportive policy legacies, and when indexation was less likely to be framed as a large tax increase on employers.

SOCIAL PROGRAMS AND THE POLITICS OF FISCAL CONSTRICTION

Although the politics of financing social benefits generally receive less attention in welfare state literature than the politics of providing social ben-

efits, there is consensus that programs with dedicated financing sources, especially social insurance programs with payroll contributions, are more likely to engender popular support and thus prove more difficult to retrench than programs without such dedicated sources of revenue. The political popularity of earmarked contributions is thought to be an important explanation for the durability of Social Security (and Medicare, to a lesser extent; cf. Patashnik and Zelizer 2001). As Theda Skocpol has argued, "Social Security retirement insurance always benefited—ideologically as well as fiscally—from the existence of its earmarked payroll tax and nominally separate trust fund. Social Security taxes were deliberately labeled 'contributions' and were treated as payments that built up individual 'eligibility' for 'earned benefits'" (Skocpol 2000, 42). In a similar vein, Andrea Campbell argues that citizens are more willing to finance highly visible benefits through payroll contributions. To Campbell's mind, this in part explains why Americans report that Social Security contributions are one of the most popular (or rather, least unpopular) form of taxes (Campbell 2011, 61; see also Campbell and Morgan 2005). Finally, Paul Pierson identifies the structure of Social Security and its use of self-financing earmarked contributions as an important bulwark against more drastic retrenchment under the Reagan administration (Pierson 1995, 71).

The political strength of self-financed social insurance programs, however, relies on the assumption that these programs will have access to a steady tax base. If a self-financed program, even a social insurance program, does not capture a constant share of revenue, it will become increasingly insolvent over time. A gradually diminishing tax base, which I term fiscal constriction, may in turn force legislators to make cuts to the program (see also Klitgaard and Elmelund-Præstekær [2012] on a related point).[1] Fiscal constriction may also jeopardize the program's effectiveness by preventing policy makers from making updates to the program that are necessary to ensure that the program maintains a constant level of risk protection (what Hacker [2004] terms "drift," a mismatch between a program's objectives and its effectiveness because of changing social or economic conditions).

1. Fiscal constriction could be thought of as the application of the "starve the beast" strategy for a specific social program. "Starve the beast" proponents claim that tax cuts will increase the federal deficit and thus put downward pressure on federal spending (see, e.g., Frankel 2008).

Fiscal constriction is likely pursued by proponents of retrenchment over the long run, as they take advantage of wage growth and inflation to gradually shrink a program's tax base. In this way, fiscal constriction is just as much a strategy of calculated inaction as action. This article argues that fiscal constriction through the deliberate lack of taxable wage base indexation has been a common mode of retrenchment in the American UI system.

THE STRUCTURE OF AMERICAN UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

The Social Security Act of 1935 established the structure for the federal-state UI system as a way to replace a portion of past wages temporarily for workers with a recent work history who become unemployed through no fault of their own.[2] In addition to easing the financial hardship faced by unemployed individuals and their families, policy makers hoped that UI would provide a source of macroeconomic stabilization during economic downturns. Legislators also believed that by varying employer UI contributions by a firm's layoff record, UI would provide employers with an incentive to stabilize their hiring and firing practices.

The UI system provides three main types of benefits. Regular benefits are delivered and financed by individual state governments within certain broad requirements set by the federal government. The individual states must pay for regular benefits themselves, but the federal government provides funding for the administration of regular UI benefits through a federal UI tax on employers. Second, the joint federal-state extended benefits program pays additional benefits when states reach certain levels of unemployment. The federal government and individual state governments typically share the cost of financing these extended benefits. Finally, Congress may pass temporary extended benefits during recessions that are financed completely by the federal government.

This article focuses on regular UI because it is the central part of the program that is administered and financed by state governments and because workers must exhaust their regular benefits before they can become eligible for other forms of extended benefits. Regular benefit payments av-

2. Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands operate their own UI programs as part of the federal-state system, but I do not include them in my study.

erage about $300 per week and typically replace slightly less than half of an average worker's wage.[3] Only about a third of the unemployed have actually received regular benefits in recent years.[4]

States mainly finance their regular UI programs through employer payroll contributions on behalf of covered workers. There are two primary components of state UI taxes: the tax rate and the wage base. State UI tax rates are the share of the wage base that employers must contribute to the UI system for each UI covered worker. To participate in the federal-state UI program, a state's wage base must be set at least at the level of the federal UI wage base, which is currently $7,000. This means that in a state with the minimum wage base, only the first $7,000 of workers' wages is taxed, and this value is not adjusted for changes in prices or wages each year. There is considerable variation in the structure of UI taxes, especially the level of the wage base. Wage bases in 2012 ranged from $38,800 in Hawaii to two states that had the minimum base of $7,000 (California and Arizona). The average taxable wage base in 2012 was $16,335.

Employers do not pay UI taxes at the same rate, even in the same state. The tax rate for a particular employer varies with that employer's use of the UI system, what is referred to as the experience rate. Businesses that lay off more workers who then claim UI benefits tend to pay higher tax rates relative to businesses that lay off fewer workers who claim UI benefits. Although all states experience rate their UI contributions, the schedules of tax rates (i.e., the lowest and highest rates paid by employers, as well as the degree to which the rates change with layoff records) vary greatly by state. Tax rates also vary based on the solvency of state trust funds; in many states tax rates (or the schedules of rates) will automatically rise as trust fund solvency falls. Finally, many states may levy a surcharge on employers that takes effect when a trust fund is at risk of insolvency.

3. See the national average replacement rate data from 1988 to 2010: "Replacement Rates, US Average," Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Unemployment Insurance Chartbook: https://workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/unemploy/Chartbook/a16.asp.

4. See the share of the unemployed filing for benefits from 2000 to 2011: "Regular Program Insured Unemployment as a Percent of Total Unemployment," Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Unemployment Insurance Chartbook: https://workforcesecurity.doleta.gov/unemploy/Chartbook/a12.asp. See also Gould-Werth and Shaefer 2012.

Although the federal government sets a minimum floor for the state wage base, it has not updated this floor since 1983. Legislation passed in 1939 set the federal UI wage base at $3,000 to match the wage base used for the Social Security program ($3,000 is equivalent to about $48,000 in 2011 dollars and represented close to 100 percent of total wages at the time; NCUC 1980, 80). Unlike the Social Security program, however, the federal UI taxable wage base has only increased three times (to $4,200 in 1972, $6,000 in 1978, and $7,000 in 1983), while the Social Security taxable wage base is indexed to a national measure of average workers' wages. This means that as wages gradually increase, so too does the amount of earnings subject to Social Security taxes. In contrast, because the federal UI taxable wage base is not indexed, the share of wages that federal and state UI taxes cover will continue to fall unless Congress takes action to deliberately increase the base. For example, in 2011, the federal taxable wage base was $7,000; this represents an inflation-adjusted decline of 85 percent between 1939 and 2011.

Figure 1 compares the inflation-adjusted values of the Social Security and federal UI taxable wage bases and shows the striking erosion of the real value of the federal UI base over time since the passage of the New Deal. Note that the three legislated updates to the federal UI base did not do much to change the downward trend over time. The figure also shows the national average wage index for comparison, which the Social Security Administration uses to track average worker wages. While the Social Security taxable wage base has steadily surpassed average wages, the federal unemployment insurance taxable wage base has fallen relative to national average wages. In light of the failure of the federal government to index the federal UI taxable wage base, about a third of states have implemented indexation of their own UI wage bases. In the following sections, I examine both the quantitative effect that trends in UI taxation, including indexation, have had on UI trust fund solvency, as well as the reasons why some states have managed to pass indexation of their taxable wage bases while most states have not.

THE EROSION IN STATE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FINANCES

The UI system's finances have been historically weak by any standard in recent years. At the end of August 2012, 19 state trust funds were insol-

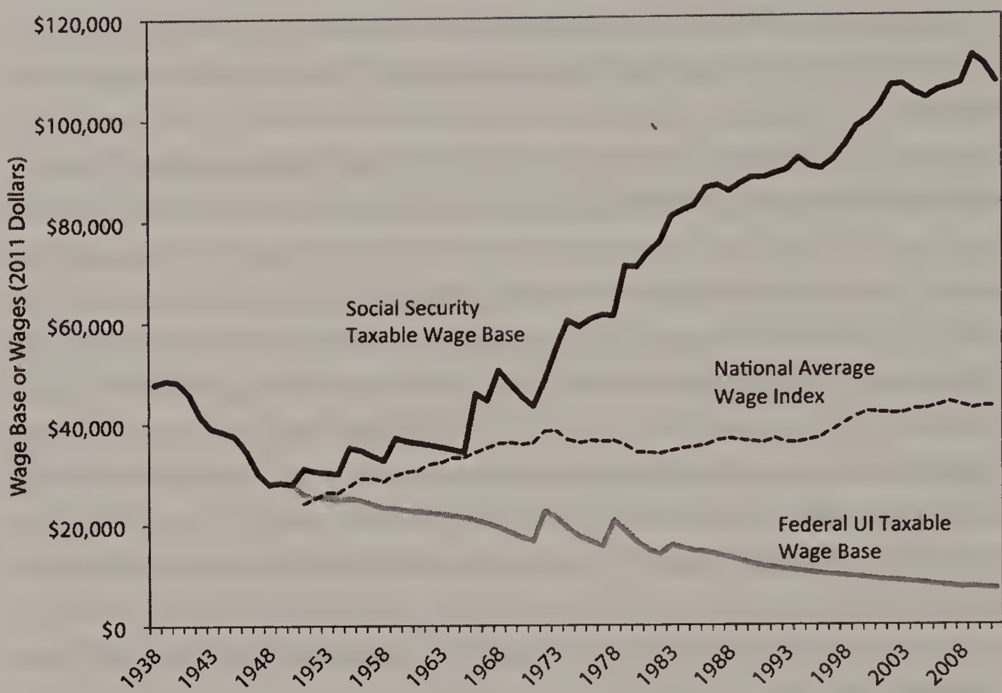

FIGURE 1. Inflation-adjusted values of the Social Security taxable wage base, federal UI taxable wage base, and national average wage index data from the Department of Labor and the Social Security Administration. This figure shows that, adjusted for inflation, the Social Security taxable wage base has grown over time while the federal unemployment insurance taxable wage base has steadily fallen, both relative to its earlier values and to average wages.

vent and thus were borrowing funds from the federal government (down from 29 states at the start of 2012, according to the Department of Labor's quarterly financial data). The recent decline in UI reserves is to be expected given the magnitude of the Great Recession. Increasing rates of unemployment in recent years has meant an increasing number of workers claiming UI benefits, a longer duration of UI benefits for those receiving them, and a decline in the number of workers from whom taxes are collected to finance UI trust funds.

The UI system, however, was already weak going into the Great Recession. UI finances began eroding, for many states, in the 1970s. Figure 2 shows the aggregate UI reserve ratio for all states over the history of the program. The reserve ratio is the net reserves in a state's UI trust fund divided by the total wages in UI-covered employment in a state, and it is a common measure of UI solvency. Unemployment insurance analyst Wayne Vroman identifies four distinct periods in UI financing that correspond to the major trends in figure 2 (Vroman 1998, 14–17). During the early years

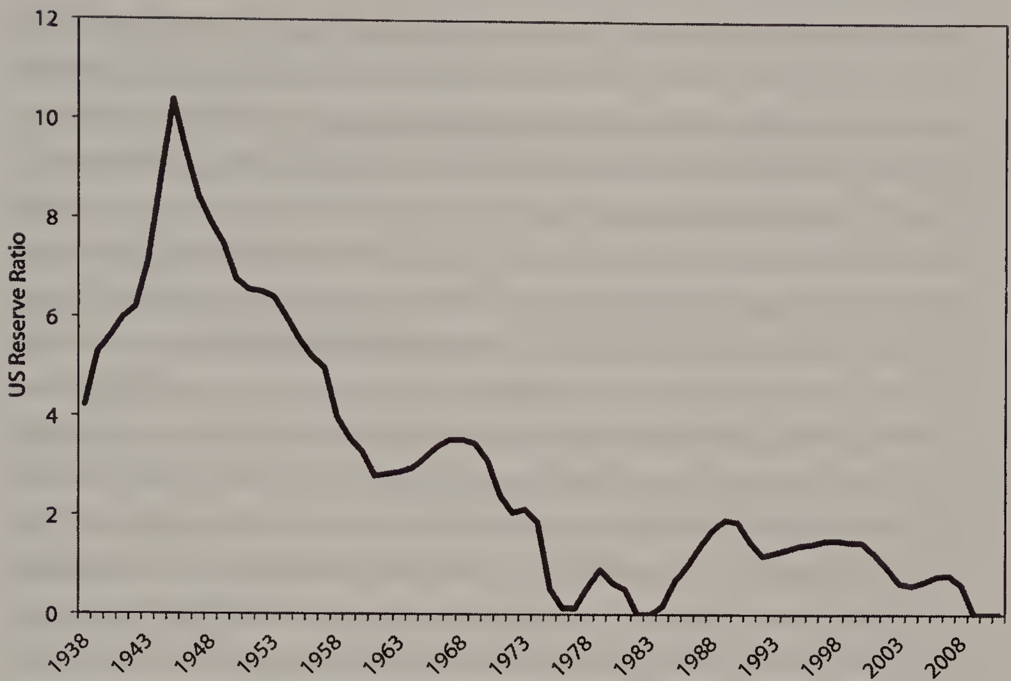

FIGURE 2. State UI reserve ratios. Data from US Department of Labor. This figure shows the aggregate reserve ratio for all state unemployment insurance systems, or the ratio of the UI trust fund to total wages in covered employment. By this measure, funding of the UI system has generally eroded over time.

of the program (from the start of UI operations to the late 1940s), states accumulated large trust fund surpluses due to lower than anticipated benefit costs, as well as the strong macroeconomic conditions and full employment associated with the war. In the second phase, from the late 1940s to the late 1970s, states experienced a steady decline in trust fund reserves, as a result of large losses during recessions and modest reserve accumulation during periods of expansion. However, because of the very large reserves that states had already accrued in the earlier years of the program, states generally did not encounter solvency problems until the mid- to late 1970s. Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, high unemployment and repeated recessions caused major state solvency crises. In the early 1980s, states began to build up their trust funds again, though the level and rate of accumulation were lower relative to the early years of the program. In the final period of UI financing, from the early 1990s onward, UI reserves have stagnated and eroded in many states. Despite the strong economic growth in the 1990s, most states did not accumulate much in the way of reserves. As a result, by 2007, the average state had a reserve ratio of 1.3 percent, and 25 states had reserve ratios lower than 1 percent of total wages.

The deterioration of state UI finances has important consequences for the ability of UI to provide economic security to workers and automatic economic stabilization during economic downturns. As a national Advisory Council on Unemployment Compensation warned in 1996, because UI is intended to be a self-financed program, weakened solvency will force state legislators to reduce benefits or restrict program eligibility if states do not act to raise taxes (ACUC 1996, 56). This constriction is unfolding now in the wake of the Great Recession. For example, legislators in at least six states have instituted cuts in UI benefits during 2011 as a result of diminished trust funds (McKenna and Wentworth 2011). There is also evidence that pressure from declining finances has forced states to tighten eligibility requirements for their programs over the past several decades, resulting in a decline in the share of unemployed workers claiming benefits, although many other factors, like the changing composition of the labor force and falling union density, have also affected changes in benefit receipt (ACUC 1996; Graetz and Mashaw 2000). The share of unemployed workers actually receiving UI benefits fell from a peak of about 54 percent in the 1950s to less than a third of the unemployed today, according to Department of Labor data. Consistent with this evidence, new research by Daniel Smith and Jeffrey Wenger shows that trust fund solvency and benefit generosity are positively related to one another and that there is evidence that higher solvency may lead states to increase benefits (Smith and Wenger 2013). Their findings suggest that eroding solvency could threaten the generosity of UI benefits.

It is also important to note that the failure to update UI coverage to reflect the transformation of the labor force can be considered retrenchment in its own right, as, for example, a growing part-time and low-wage workforce has difficulty accessing the UI system (see, e.g., Shaefer 2010; Enchautegui 2012). New provisions would be necessary to ensure that these populations have access to the program, and states have generally not yet implemented such changes.

Finally, deteriorating UI finances leave states unprepared for future economic downturns, exposing states to the risk of insolvency. States that are insolvent must take out loans from the federal government to finance their benefits, and these loans must be repaid with interest. Tax rates on employers then automatically increase to repay the principal on these loans, and states may also enact special taxes on employers to repay interest. These tax increases occur even when state economies remain weak. Weak-

ened UI finances thus threaten the ability of the program to provide automatic macroeconomic stabilization during recessions.

The cause of the long-term erosion in UI finances has been a source of debate in recent years. Some observers of the UI system, such as the US General Accountability Office (2010) and UI policy analyst Vroman (2011), argue that lower UI taxes are primarily responsible for declining solvency. Yet others claim that overly generous benefits are to blame. For example, in recent testimony to Congress in a hearing on UI solvency, Douglas Holmes, president of a UI consultancy, reported that "the scope of the unemployment insurance system in a number of states has been expanded and benefit payout associated with these expansions has contributed to the insolvency of the state unemployment benefit accounts" (Holmes 2010). Holmes's perspective is also shared by many groups across the states, which have pointed to high benefits or loose eligibility standards as contributing to insolvency and have thus recommended cuts in benefits and eligibility as the main mechanism for restoring balance to UI trust funds. The Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry, for example, stated in 2012 that "statistics clearly show that [the UI] system suffers from a spending problem, not a revenue problem, due in part to an overly generous benefits system and broad eligibility requirements" (Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry 2012). Similarly, in testimony to Michigan's legislature in 2011, the Chamber of Commerce blamed the state's insolvency, first, on the economic crisis and, second, on fraudulent claims and overpayments (Block 2011).

Understanding what factors have contributed to the erosion in UI finances is relevant to proposals for improving the program's solvency. If it is overly generous benefits that have led to the long-run erosion in solvency, it might make sense for state and federal legislators to focus on cuts to benefits and eligibility to improve the program's finances. But if those factors have contributed little to variation in the program's finances compared to other program features, such as taxes, then legislators should focus on reforming taxes rather than benefits.

THE DETERMINANTS OF STATE TRUST FUND SOLVENCY

In order to examine the role of various factors in contributing to trends in UI finances across the states, I conduct a time-series, cross-sectional analysis using annual data from the Department of Labor on state UI pro-

grams (specifically, data from the *Employment and Training Administration's Unemployment Insurance Financial Handbook* 394) combined with several other sources.[5]

I expect that the solvency of a state's UI trust fund will be a function of the design of that state's UI program and the economic conditions in that state. My data cover the 50 states in addition to the District of Columbia from 1978 to 2008. This time range maximizes the availability of the variables, particularly state unemployment rates and median family income. I have a balanced panel where $T = 31$, $n = 51$, and thus $N = 1{,}581$.

To measure the solvency of a state's UI trust fund, I use two variables: a state's high cost multiple and its reserve ratio. The high cost multiple is a common measure of state trust fund solvency that relates the current size of the trust fund to the period of highest UI spending since 1958. The high cost multiple is calculated by dividing a state's reserve ratio (net trust fund reserves divided by the total amount of wages of workers in UI covered employment) by the state's high cost rate (the highest amount of benefits paid out in a year since 1958 divided by the total amount of wages of workers in UI covered employment). It is an especially useful indicator because it is easy to interpret. A high cost multiple of 1.0, for example, indicates that a state would have sufficient trust fund reserves to pay out a year's worth of benefits at the state's highest cost levels; a high cost multiple of 0.5 would indicate that a state could pay out 6 months worth of benefits at those levels. Because the high cost multiple can change through either the numerator or the denominator (i.e., a change in the reserve ratio or in the period of highest expenditures), I also estimate separate models with the reserve ratio as the outcome to ensure the robustness of my results to different measures of solvency.

I use the ratio of UI taxable to total wages to measure the UI tax capacity of a state. States that have higher taxable wage bases generally have higher ratios of taxable to total wages (for 2008, e.g., the R^2 for this relationship was .87). In general, a $1,000 increase in the taxable wage base is associated with an increase in the ratio of about .02. I expect that increases

5. These other sources include the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the March Current Population Survey, and the National Bureau of Economic Research.

in the ratio of taxable to total wages will result in increases in the financial health of a state's trust fund.[6]

I include variables to measure several other salient aspects of a state's UI system. The tax rate paid by employers is captured with a variable that measures the average share of taxable wages paid by businesses. Although experience rating is undoubtedly an important feature of the American unemployment insurance system, the data to adequately measure the degree of state experience rating exist but are unavailable for a sufficient length of time to include such a variable in my analysis. Such a limitation is unfortunate because two states with the same average employer tax rate could arrive at that rate through very different tax structures.[7] I enter a variable to measure a state's replacement rate, or the average share of wages replaced by unemployment insurance benefits (calculated as the average weekly unemployment insurance benefit divided by the average weekly wage of workers in UI covered employment). I also include the average duration of unemployment insurance beneficiaries, measured in weeks. Finally, I enter the number of first payments to measure the overall number of claims in a particular state and year.[8]

6. The findings are also robust to using other measures of the UI tax capacity of a state, including the statutory taxable wage base and the taxable wage base expressed as a share of average wages.

7. It is difficult to know how the omission of measures of experience rating might bias my results since the effect of experience rating depends on the rate schedule for a particular state, as well as the distribution of employers at those various rates. For example, two states with the same schedule of tax rates could still have different levels of solvency if one state had most firms clustered at the low rates and the other state had most firms clustered at the higher rates. In general, however, given accounts of UI policy history that claim that states have used experience rating to lower overall contribution rates (especially in recent years; see, e.g., Baldwin 2001), I predict that greater experience rating would lead to lower solvency, and thus that the omission of experience rating in my analysis would understate the importance of variation in UI taxes for trust fund solvency.

8. Note that I divide this variable and the size of the UI covered workforce by one million to make the regression results more readable. I enter UI first payments as a level instead of as a share because it is unclear what an appropriate denominator for this variable might be. This is because first payments include repeated instances of the same individual claiming benefits multiple times in a year. My results are robust, however, to expressing first payments and average monthly covered employment as shares of the state labor force. Consistent with the results, the ratio of taxable to total wages is generally the most important source of variation in long-run program finances in these specifications.

To gauge the potential effect of state economic conditions on UI trust funds, I include three variables: the size of the UI covered workforce with the 12-month average of UI covered workers; median family income for a state (using microdata extracts from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey [King and colleagues 2011] divided by ten thousand) as a measure of the overall level of state economic development; and the unemployment rate in a state (using published data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics).[9] In order to control for common shocks in each year, I enter year dummy variables.[10] I also include a dummy variable to indicate whether the National Bureau of Economic Research declared any part of a year as being in a recession. Finally, to account for potentially unmodeled state-level effects, I include state dummy variables. Table 1 reviews the descriptive statistics for the substantive variables used in the analysis.

I estimate an error correction model, an approach to time-series analysis that models variables as having an equilibrium relationship in the long run. This makes sense since states must self-finance their UI systems. The core intuition is that deviations from the relationship between variables (the errors) are eliminated over time through changes in the dependent variable (error correction). Although error correction models are often discussed in the context of co-integration (a statistical term for processes that drift randomly together), recent research has emphasized that co-integration is simply a specialized case of error correction and not a requirement for error correction models (Keele and De Boef 2004; De Boef and Keele 2008; Beck and Katz 2011).

While co-integration is one reason to use an error correction model, error correction models also permit researchers to identify the temporal dynamics associated with a particular relationship, examining not only short-run and instantaneous effects but also the long-term effects of variables.[11] Because of their flexibility, error correction models have become

9. I include the state unemployment rate to measure the effects of general labor market conditions that are not captured by the number of UI first payments, reflecting the fact that in some states the number of UI beneficiaries may be more or less correlated with overall trends in the labor market (because of variation in eligibility and take-up). Statistical tests also suggest that including this variable improves model fit.

10. The results are robust to using a year and year squared time trend as well.

11. In this study, statistical tests reveal that both of the dependent variables—the reserve ratio and the high cost multiple—as well the ratio of taxable to total wages variable have unit roots (tests were not conclusive for the other variables). Thus, the primary variable of interest

TABLE 1. Descriptive Statistics for Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund Solvency Analysis (1978–2008)

Variable	Source	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Reserve ratio	DOL	1.54	1.12	−.53	5.41
High cost multiple	DOL	.64	.46	−.19	2.38
Taxable/total wages	DOL	.42	.13	.15	.72
Taxable wage base indexation	DOL	.31	.46	0	1
Average employer tax rate	DOL	2.18	1.00	.22	7.08
Average benefit generosity	DOL	.37	.05	.19	.54
Average duration	DOL	13.98	2.56	5.40	27.10
First payments	DOL	163,186	196,648	6,752	1,491,112
Average covered employment	DOL	1,740,281	1,928,994	112,354	12,600,000
Median family income	CPS	57,093	8,702	37,632	89,998
State unemployment	8LS	5.78	1.97	2.30	17.40
N8ER recession	N8ER	.26	.44	0	1

Note.—Observations = 1,581. See text for definition of variables. DOL = US Department of Labor, *Financial Data Handbook* 394; CPS = Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey; 8LS = 8ureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics; N8ER = National 8ureau of Economic Research, US 8usiness Cycle Expansions and Contractions.

increasingly common in quantitative social science work, especially in political science (see, e.g., Haber and Menaldo 2011) and sociology (see, e.g. Volscho and Kelly 2012). An error correction model strikes a good balance between relatively easy implementation and interpretation and allowing flexibility in temporal dynamics (unlike more static regressions that assume only instantaneous relationships between variables; Beck and Katz 2011).

Formally, the model is estimated as follows, where Δ is the first difference operator, t refers to a year, and s refers to a state:

$$\begin{aligned}\Delta\text{UI Trust Fund Adequacy}_{t,s} = {}& \beta_1\text{UI Trust Fund Adequacy}_{t-1,s} \\ & + \beta_2\text{Tax Variables}_{t-1,s} + \beta_3\Delta\text{Tax Variables}_{t,s} \\ & + \beta_4\text{Generosity Variables}_{t-1,s} + \beta_5\Delta\text{Generosity Variables}_{t-1,s} \\ & + \beta_6\text{State Economic Conditions}_{t-1,s} + \beta_7\Delta\text{State Economic Conditions}_{t,s} \\ & + \text{State Dummies} + \text{Year Dummies} + \varepsilon_s.\end{aligned}$$

There are three main possibilities for the temporal dynamics of an independent variable in the model. An independent variable is observed only to have transitory effects such that it changes trust fund adequacy contemporaneously but its effect does not persist over time when the lagged term is zero and the first-differenced term is nonzero. Alternatively, an

(among other variables) could have co-integrating relationships with the dependent variables, making the error correction model even more appealing.

independent variable could have both instantaneous effects and long-term equilibrium effects if both first-differenced and lagged coefficients are nonzero. Finally, a variable may only have long-run effects if the lagged term is nonzero and the first differenced term is zero.

Adding additional lags of the dependent variable (2 or 3 years) does not meaningfully change the coefficients or their substantive interpretation. I therefore proceed with one lag of the dependent variable for the rest of the analysis. Additional lags of the independent variables are generally not statistically significant at conventional levels of significance, so I do not increase the number of lags of the independent variables either.

Following the advice of Nathaniel Beck and Jonathan Katz (2011), I estimate panel-corrected standard errors. I find that these corrected standard errors are similar to those estimated with normal ordinary least squares (OLS) and thus conclude that my data do not exhibit substantial cross-sectional dependence or heteroskedasticity. I also estimate standard errors using panel bootstrapping as an additional robustness check, as recommended by Jonathan Bischof (2009). Large differences between the panel bootstrapped standard errors and the uncorrected OLS errors could indicate the presence of substantial temporal dependence. However, the two sets of standard errors are relatively similar to one another, indicating that even if there is remaining autocorrelation present in the data, it is not substantially affecting the results.[12]

Table 2 shows the main results of the solvency analysis, with both reserve ratios and high cost multiples as outcomes. For each outcome, I show the OLS coefficients, the OLS uncorrected standard errors, and the panel-bootstrapped standard errors. It is immediately apparent that changes in UI financial solvency are persistent over time. For both the reserve ratio and the high cost multiple models, the lagged dependent variable is statistically significant and relatively small. The statistical significance of this coefficient indicates that there is a stable equilibrium process between the independent and dependent variables and that an error correction model is in fact warranted. The small size of the estimates for both the reserve ratio and the high cost multiple models indicates that the changes in solvency are highly persistent over time. According to the results, about 96 percent (1.00 − .04) of a change in the reserve ratio persists from one year to the next and 94 percent (1.00 − .06) of a change in the high cost

12. I also find similar standard errors using the Newey-West estimation method (Wooldridge 2005).

TABLE 2. Error Correction Analysis of State Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund Solvency

	Outcome					
	UI High Cost Multiple			UI Reserve Ratio		
Variable	Coefficient	OLS SE	PB SE	Coefficient	OLS SE	PB SE
Lagged dependent variable	−.06	.01	.02	−.04	.01	.02
Change of taxable/total wages	.46	.10	.16	1.04	.23	.35
Level of taxable/total wages	.73	.06	.09	1.76	.14	.20
Change in employer tax rate	.08	.01	.01	.22	.02	.04
Level of employer tax rate	.12	.01	.01	.33	.01	.03
Change in benefit generosity	−.76	.17	.20	−1.38	.40	.45
Level of benefit generosity	−.99	.09	.15	−2.33	.21	.31
Change in average duration	−.02	.002	.004	−.04	.01	.01
Level of average duration	−.02	.003	.01	−.04	.01	.01
Change in first payments	−.38	.10	.19	−.86	.22	.49
Level of first payments	−.17	.08	.16	−.45	.19	.42
Change in average coverage	−.18	.06	.12	−.45	.13	.28
Level of average coverage	−.03	.01	.01	−.04	.02	.03
Change in median income	.01	.01	.01	.04	.02	.02
Level of median income	.003	.01	.01	.02	.02	.03
Change in state unemployment	−.03	.005	.01	−.09	.01	.02
Level of state unemployment	−.02	.003	.004	−.06	.01	.01
NBER recession	.04	.02	.03	.14	.05	.07

Note.—State and year dummies are included but not shown. OLS SE = uncorrected OLS standard errors; PB SE = panel bootstrapped standard errors (1,000 replications). Balanced panel: $n = 51$, $T = 31$, $N = 1{,}581$.

multiple persists from year to year. Thus, while UI benefits, taxes, and trust funds are in equilibrium, it takes a relatively long time for the trust funds to adjust to changes in benefits or taxes to reach a new equilibrium.

The signs on the coefficients generally follow my expectation that increases in the UI tax variables or decreases in the generosity or demand variables generally improve UI solvency. In addition, both the high cost multiple and the reserve ratio models are highly consistent with one another. In order to interpret the substantive effects of the results, I conduct a series of simulations using data from the UI program's overall history to show the effect of a one standard deviation change in various explanatory variables on the total change in either the reserve ratio or the high cost multiple. The results of these simulations appear in figure 3.

This study observes that increases in the ratio of taxable wages to total wages and increases in the tax rate paid by employers cause large and persistent increases in UI solvency over time. Figure 3 shows that a one standard deviation increase in the ratio of taxable to total wages is expected to cause an 8.7 percentage point increase in a state's reserve ratio and a 2.6 increase in a state's high cost multiple (both largely through long-term effects). This represents an increase in a state's ability to pay benefits at

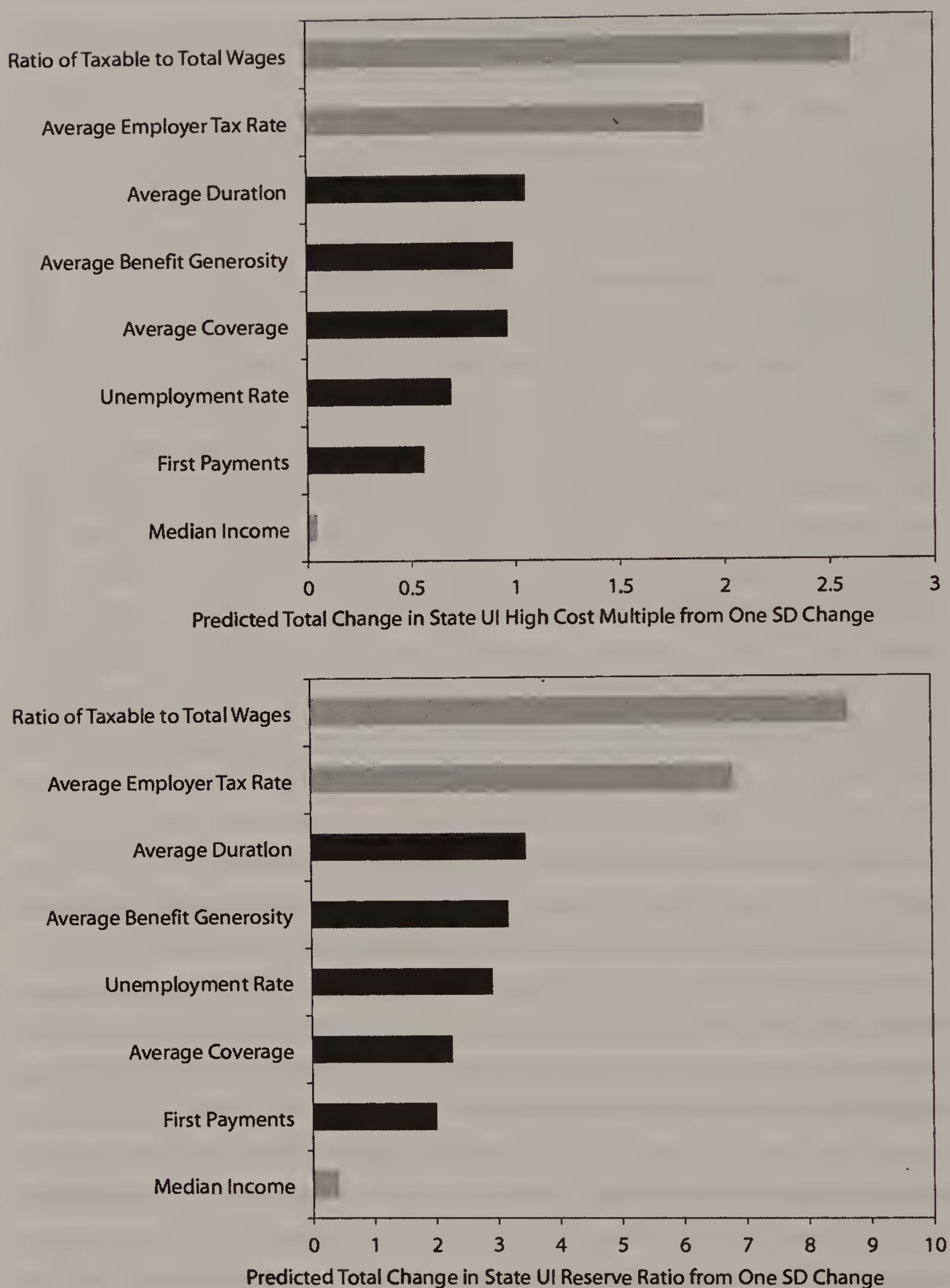

FIGURE 3. Total estimated effects of a one standard deviation change in various variables on UI solvency. Data from error correction model regression results in table 2. This figure shows the total predicted change in either a state's high cost multiple (top) or reserve ratio (bottom) from a one standard deviation change in various independent variables across the program's history, holding all other variables constant. Gray bars indicate a one standard deviation increase while black bars indicate a one standard deviation decrease. This figure shows that changes in UI tax policy over the course of the program's history—especially the ratio of taxable to total wages—have the greatest total effect on UI solvency, while changes in generosity, demand, or economic conditions have weaker effects.

the state's highest rate of over 2.5 years. A one standard deviation increase in average employer tax rates causes an increase in solvency as well, though the total effect is slightly less than that of the ratio of taxable to total wages for both the high cost multiple and reserve ratio models.

In contrast, increases in UI generosity, in UI duration, and in the state unemployment rate all cause enduring but smaller decreases in UI solvency. A one standard deviation increase in the average generosity of benefits produces a total decline in a state's high cost multiple of about 1.0, or about a year of solvency at the state's highest cost rate. From the figure we can see that the model predicts that changes to a state's tax structure (and especially the tax base) produced the largest total changes in UI solvency relative to changes in generosity or other economic conditions.

To further illustrate the estimated effect of changes in taxes, we can ask what would have happened if Indiana, which had one of the lowest levels of solvency in 2008, increased its ratio of taxable to total wages to the national average in 2008. This would mean that Indiana moved from subjecting 22 percent of total wages to taxes to subjecting 34 percent of total wages to taxes. Such a move would have caused an immediate increase in Indiana's high cost multiple of .06 and then an increase of 1.4 in the long run. This corresponds to Indiana being able to pay out an additional year and a half's worth of benefits at its highest cost levels.

Another way of considering the temporal dynamics of changes in solvency can be found in figure 4, which uses data from table 2 to predict the effect of a one standard deviation increase in the ratio of taxable to total wages on a state's high cost multiple (gray bars), and the cumulative effect for all the periods so far (black line). So, for example, an increase in the ratio of taxable to total wages by one standard deviation produces a .11 increase in the high cost multiple in the fifth year after the shock, for a cumulative .73 increase in that year. With each passing year the effect of the shock in the tax base diminishes, so the rate of change in the cumulative effect slows as well. What is striking about this plot, however, is that it shows just how slowly UI trust funds return to equilibrium. Changes in the various policy characteristics of state UI programs can produce very long-term effects on state solvency, lasting more than 20 years in the case of the ratio of taxable to total wages.

Collectively, these results suggest that the deterioration of UI finances is not simply a result of economic downturns, an increased demand for benefits, or overly generous benefits, but rather a form of fiscal constric-

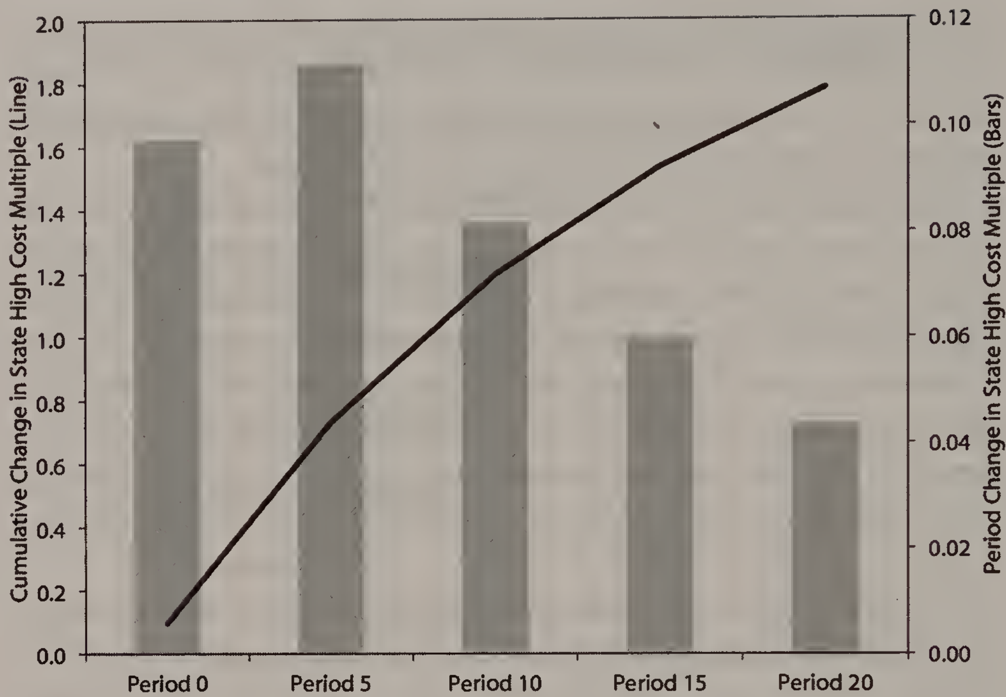

FIGURE 4. Dynamic estimated effects of a one standard deviation increase in the ratio of taxable to total wages on UI solvency. Data from error correction model regression results in table 2. This figure shows the period (gray bars, right axis) and cumulative (black line, left axis) effect from a one standard deviation increase in the ratio of taxable to total wages on a state's high cost multiple, holding all other variables constant. This figure shows that changes in UI solvency are highly persistent over time; shocks in variables—like the tax base—continue to affect solvency for many years.

tion. This study shows that changes in UI financing, especially the erosion of the tax base, have driven a substantial portion of the deterioration in UI solvency.

In many cases, it is a combination of both passive and active decisions by policy makers that has caused the erosion in UI taxes. Only a handful of states have taken the step of indexing their bases so that the bases rise automatically with average wages. Therefore, unless legislators take action each year to update their state's wage bases (or other actions to raise tax rates or reduce benefit generosity), their UI trust funds will generally collect declining revenue and their solvency will diminish over time.

Figure 5 shows the importance of indexation of a state's tax base to maintain a constant ratio of taxable to total wages. The top line shows the ratio of taxable to total wages for states with an indexed wage base. These states have covered a relatively constant share of wages. Between 1979

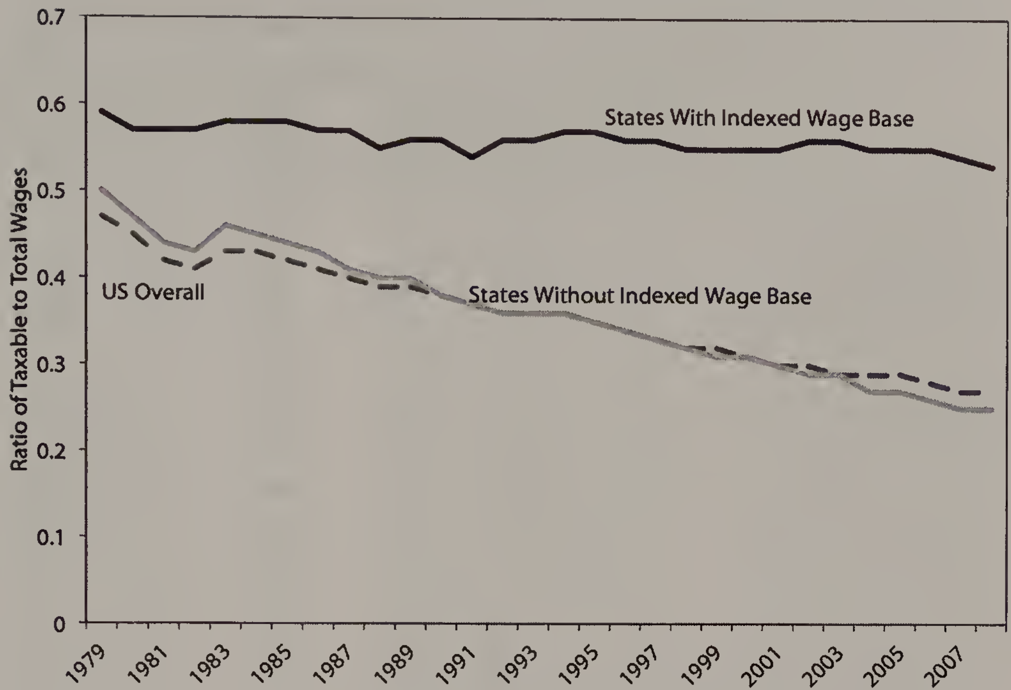

FIGURE 5. Ratio of taxable to total wages in indexing and nonindexing states. Data from the Department of Labor; chart replicated from US Government Accountability Office (2010). This figure shows that states with indexed taxable wage bases have maintained stronger and relatively more consistent ratios of taxable to total wages compared to states without indexed wage bases. Given that states with indexed wage bases only represent a small share of all states, the overall trend for the United States is downward over time.

and 2008, the ratio of taxable to total wages in these states only declined by 6 percentage points. In contrast, states without indexation had steadily declining shares of taxable to total wages. From 1979 to 2008, the ratio of taxable to total wages fell by 25 percentage points for nonindexing states. Although nonindexing states have the option of periodically raising their tax bases, these states are evidently not doing so frequently enough to maintain a constant ratio of taxable to total wages: the average nonindexing state only increased its taxable wage base four times. As a result, nonindexing states apply their UI taxes to a declining share of wages, generating less revenue for their UI systems, and as this article shows, resulting in lower levels of UI solvency.

What difference does it make for a state to index their taxable wage base? To answer this question, I repeat the regression models estimated above, but replace the variable measuring the ratio of a state's taxable to total wages with a dummy variable that indicates whether a state has indexed its taxable wage base. Table 3 reports the full results. In the model, indexing

TABLE 3. Error Correction Analysis of State Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund Solvency with Indexation of Taxable Wage Base

	State UI High Cost Multiple			State UI Reserve Ratio		
Variable	Coefficient	OLS SE	PB SE	Coefficient	OLS SE	PB SE
Lagged dependent variable	−.06	.01	.02	−.04	.01	.02
Change in indexation	.04	.03	.04	.13	.08	.10
Indexation	.10	.02	.03	.25	.04	.09
Change in employer tax rate	.07	.01	.01	.20	.02	.03
Level of employer tax rate	.11	.01	.01	.29	.01	.03
Change in benefit generosity	−.84	.18	.21	−1.57	.41	.46
Level of benefit generosity	−.83	.10	.14	−1.95	.22	.30
Change in average duration	−.02	.003	.004	−.05	.01	.01
Level of average duration	−.02	.003	.01	−.05	.01	.02
Change in first payments	−.34	.10	.18	−.77	.23	.45
Level of first payments	−.16	.09	.15	−.44	.20	.38
Change in average coverage	−.17	.06	.11	−.43	.13	.26
Level of average coverage	−.04	.01	.01	−.08	.02	.03
Change in median income	−.002	.01	.01	.01	.02	.02
Level of median income	−.02	.01	.01	−.03	.02	.03
Change in state unemployment	−.03	.005	.01	−.09	.01	.02
Level of state unemployment	−.02	.003	.005	−.05	.01	.01
NBER recession	−.08	.02	.03	−.15	.05	.07

Note.—State and year dummies included but not shown. OLS SE: uncorrected OLS standard errors; PB SE: panel bootstrapped standard errors (1,000 replications). Balanced panel: $n = 51$, $T = 31$, $N =$ 1,581.

a state's taxable wage base results in a persistent increase in that state's high cost multiple of about 1.7 (or a 6.3 percentage point increase in a state's reserve ratio).[13] Indexation of a state's taxable wage base thus could have resulted in stronger state UI solvency over the program's history. These findings are consistent with previous work that proposes the lack of indexation in most states as a major factor in the deterioration of UI finances (see, e.g., Vroman 1998, 50–53; US Government Accountability Office 2010).

THE POLITICS OF STATE UI FINANCES

In light of the finding that a state's decision to index its taxable wage base has large and persistent effects on that state's UI solvency, why are more states not pursuing this option? As of 2012, only 17 states had indexation in effect. I conduct an event history analysis to determine the correlates of a state's decision to implement indexation of its UI taxable wage base

13. As with the earlier model, I find that the uncorrected OLS standard errors, the panel-corrected standard errors, the panel-bootstrapped standard errors, and Newey-West standard errors all produce similar substantive results, indicating that my results are relatively robust.

TABLE 4. States Indexing Taxable Wage Bases in 2012

State	Year First Indexed	Computation Method (2012)
Alaska	1981	75% of state average annual wage rounded to nearest $100
Hawaii	1972	100% of state average annual wage rounded to nearest $100
Idaho	1976	100% of state average annual wage rounded to nearest $100
Iowa	1978	66 2/3% of state average weekly wage multiplied by 52, or the federal taxable wage base; rounded to higher $100
Minnesota	1983	60% of state average annual wage rounded to nearest $1,000
Montana	1979	80% of state average annual wage rounded to nearest $100
Nevada	1975	66 2/3% of state average annual wage rounded to nearest $100
New Jersey	1975	28 times state average weekly wage rounded to higher $100
New Mexico	1977	60% of state average annual wage rounded to higher $100
North Carolina	1984	50% of state average annual wage rounded to nearest $100
North Dakota	1978	70% of state average annual wage rounded to nearest $100
Oklahoma	1986	50% of state average annual wage rounded to nearest $100
Oregon	1976	80% of state average annual wage rounded to nearest $100
Rhode Island	1980	46 1/2% rounded upward to the next higher even multiple of $200
Utah	1977	75% of prior average fiscal year wage rounded to the higher $100
Washington	1974	115% of previous year's taxable wage base rounded to the lower $100, but not to exceed 80% of average annual wage for second preceding calendar year rounded to lower $100
Wyoming	1984	55% of state average annual wage rounded to lower $100

Source.—US Department of Labor State Unemployment Insurance Law Information, "2012 State Unemployment Insurance Law Information, Comparison of State UI Laws," chap. 2, table 2-2, Computation of Flexible Taxable Wage Bases.

and to better understand the political logic underpinning the erosion of UI financing. Table 4 summarizes my outcome of interest; it shows a list of states that are indexing their wage bases as of 2012 and the methodology currently employed for indexation.[14]

Viewing state inaction over indexation as a form of gradual retrenchment of UI through fiscal constriction, I draw on prior research and political theory to develop and estimate a model of the conditions under which states either index or fail to index their UI taxable wage bases. I expect that indexation is most likely when advocates of more generous UI benefits are politically strong (or, conversely, when proponents of fiscal constriction of UI are politically weak), when advocates of more generous UI benefits could draw on supportive preexisting policy legacies, and when those advocates' proposals are less likely to be framed as imposing high costs on society, especially on employers.

Drawing on historical accounts of the politics of American UI, I expect that Democrats and labor unions will be the strongest advocates of

14. Wayne Vroman generously provided these indexation dates.

UI tax base indexation as the primary proponents of more generous UI benefits (Haber and Murray 1966; Lieberman 2001; see also power resource theory generally and as applied to the American states [Korpi 1983; Kelly and Witko 2012]). Similarly, I expect that those seeking to retrench UI benefits—perhaps mostly notably conservative business associations like the Chamber of Commerce or the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) and Republicans—will typically be opposed to indexation. I hypothesize that these associations' opposition to indexation stems not only from the immediate tax increase implied by indexation but also from their historical preference for minimizing spending on UI benefits to reduce labor costs. Both in public statements and testimony, as well as private memos, the Chamber and NAM strongly opposed efforts to increase benefit generosity (their vociferous opposition to federal minimum standards during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations is a particularly vivid example; see, e.g., Congressional Quarterly 1965, 1969). Restricting updates to the taxable base would be one way for these actors to restrain the growth of the UI system through fiscal constriction.

Given that business groups like the Chamber of Commerce and NAM are most closely aligned with the Republican Party, especially at the state level (see, e.g., Chen 2007), I will operationalize the balance of power between advocates and opponents of more generous UI benefits mainly along partisan lines. Specifically, I construct this variable by examining the party that controls each chamber in the legislature and the governorship in each state. This variable ranges from zero (Republicans control both chambers and the governorship) to three (Democrats control majorities in both chambers and the governorship). Each of these three levels could be considered a veto point, or a point in the legislative process at which political actors could stymie the progress of policy making (Tsebelis 1995).

Conceptualizing control of the policy-making process in terms of veto points makes sense for the analysis, since it considers the degree to which opponents of more generous UI benefits (i.e., state Republicans and business associations) can leverage legislative inaction to induce fiscal constriction, and thus retrenchment, and control of veto points affords precisely such an opportunity for inaction. When the opponents of more generous UI spending controlled more veto points, we thus ought to observe a much lower probability of indexation. An emphasis on veto points is also consistent with the literature on welfare state retrenchment, which finds that control of veto points is crucial to explaining variation in welfare

state outcomes (see, e.g., Immergut 1990; Bonoli 2001).[15] The data used in this study on partisan control of government come from the updated historical series constructed by Carl Klarner (2013).

In order to measure labor union strength—the other primary advocate of more generous UI benefits—I use a historical series of the percent of employed workers who are union members constructed by Barry Hirsch, David Macpherson, and Wayne Vroman (2001). I expect that states with stronger labor unions will be more likely to pass taxable wage base indexation than those with weaker unions.

In addition to the strength of the relevant political actors, I draw on recent research that examines the ways that policy entrepreneurs frame and strategically craft their proposals to appeal to other legislators, interest groups, and the general public (see especially Martin 2010). This research suggests that actors will be much more successful when they can design and frame proposals in ways that maximize their appeal and minimize political opposition. I expect this to matter in two ways for UI taxable wage base indexation.

First, consistent with the literature on policy feedback, or the ways in which past policies provide resources and opportunities for future policy making (see, e.g., Pierson 1993), I expect that future policies are more likely to be successful when they can be framed as being concordant with past policy structures (see Weir, Orloff, and Skocpol 1988; also see Skocpol 1992). A number of states previously indexed their maximum UI benefits to match growth in average wages throughout the 1950s to the 1970s. I hypothesize that states that previously indexed their benefits will have been more likely to index their taxable wage bases since legislators and bureaucrats in indexing states were more likely to view indexation as a viable policy tool consistent with past state UI policy.[16] In order to measure a state's prior experience with indexation, I code whether states had benefit indexation in place for each year in my sample using summaries of state UI laws provided by the Department of Labor. Because the observed effect ought to occur over time, I lag this variable by 1 year (a 5-year lag yields

15. It is worth noting that my results are robust to using alternate measures of partisanship, including coding dummy variables for Republican, Democratic, and split party control of state government, as well as measures of state government ideology.

16. Another reason is that states with indexed benefits but without indexed taxes will, over time, experience financial pressure as rising wages increase benefits without a corresponding increase in the tax base, but this should be captured in the UI trust fund reserve ratio variable.

similar results). This also ensures that I do not consider states that index both benefits and tax bases at the same time.

Second, when the gap between the taxable wage base and average wages in the state economy is larger, I expect it will be easier for opponents to claim that the economic costs of indexation will be especially high for employers. This is because subsequent increases in the taxable wage base in a state with a low taxable wage base will represent a larger percentage increase compared to a state that has a higher taxable wage base.[17] Because the success of policy proposals is often sensitive to how actors frame the level and distribution of costs and benefits flowing from that policy, framing the cost of indexation as particularly burdensome can determine whether or not it is implemented. Policies are more likely to be passed when benefits are highly salient and can be easily touted by the policy's advocates and when costs are obscured and hard for the policy's opponents to exploit (see, e.g., Weaver 1986; Arnold 1990; Pal and Weaver 2003; Hacker and Pierson 2005; Martin 2010). The salience of the costs of a policy is likely to be even more important than the benefits of the policy, given the well-documented cognitive bias toward loss aversion, or the fact that people tend to strongly prefer avoiding losses to acquiring gains (Kahneman and Tversky 1985).

To measure the distance between average wages and taxable wages, I include the ratio of the taxable wage base to average wages in the state's labor force, calculated from the US Department of Labor's state UI data. To ensure that this variable is not endogenous to the decision to index a state's taxable wage base, I lag this variable by 1 year (a 5-year lag yields similar results).[18]

In addition to my proposed model, I consider three alternative explanations for UI indexation and fiscal constriction. First, a wide body of re-

17. To see why this is true, imagine two states with average wages of $40,000 each. One has a taxable wage base of $7,000, and the other has a taxable wage base of $20,000. Both states implement indexation, and in the following year average wages grow to $42,000. The increase implied by the implementation of indexation is $2,000 in each state, which represents a much higher percentage increase in the state with the lower taxable wage base than the state with the higher taxable wage base. As I later show, employer groups cited these larger percentage increases as a reason to oppose taxable wage base indexation.

18. The results are robust to using the ratio of taxable to total wages as well; I opt for the ratio of the taxable wage base to average wages because it is closer to the concept of cost framing I am trying to capture.

search in American politics points to a role for policy diffusion across the states, with states looking to their peers (particularly neighboring states) for positive and negative lessons to inform their own policy choices (see, e.g., Karch 2007). And indeed an examination of table 4 reveals that there does appear to be geographic clustering of states choosing to index their taxable wage bases. This theory would thus predict that states that are geographically close to another state that has implemented indexation will be more likely to introduce indexation. There are two potential mechanisms by which policy diffusion of taxable wage base indexation could operate. First, states could look to their neighbors for policy lessons: if Idaho implements indexation and it substantially improves the state's finances, Montana may take notice of Idaho's success and choose to index its own taxable wage base (often referred to as social learning [e.g., Boehmke and Witmer 2004]). Second, geographic diffusion could reflect the alleviation of regional competitive pressures (e.g., Peterson 1995); having a neighboring state implement indexation might make state governments more willing to implement indexation because they no longer fear losing jobs or firms to the neighboring state. In order to measure the effect of geographic diffusion, I create a dummy variable that indicates if in a particular year a state is bordering an indexing state.

An alternative explanation is that indexation in a given state may be a rational response on the part of legislators to changes in the economy or the labor force. If this theory is true, legislators would more likely introduce indexation when faced with insolvent trust funds or during economic downturns when they are anticipating increased strains on their UI trust funds. Likewise, state governments might rationally choose to index their taxable wage base when the ratio of their taxable wage base to average wages is low. Finally, legislators may be more attentive to indexation during periods of high inflation. This is consistent with what Kent Weaver finds in his study of indexation of federal programs (see, e.g., the case of Social Security's taxable wage base [Weaver 1988, 69–70]). I use the year-to-year percent change in the average Consumer Price Index calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in order to measure price growth.

A third explanation is ethnic heterogeneity. A considerable amount of academic research has identified a negative correlation between ethnic heterogeneity and social spending, both cross-nationally (e.g., Alesina and Glaeser 2004) and across the states (e.g., Hero 1999). Within the United States, comparative historical research finds that divisive racial relations—

especially in the South—were a key impediment to the development of a centralized, generous, and redistributive welfare state (Quadagno 1988; Katznelson 2005; Poole 2006). This line of inquiry would predict that legislators in states with more diverse populations are less likely to implement generous UI benefits and more likely to prefer fiscal constriction by avoiding indexation of the taxable wage base. I thus estimate a model to examine the correlation between the share of white, non-Hispanic individuals in a state's population, using estimates from the March Current Population Survey (King et al. 2011), and the implementation of indexation.

Although there are certainly many other factors that could be considered in this event history analysis, I deliberately restrict the number of variables because of the sparseness of the data, which includes only 17 instances of taxable wage base indexation. In logistic regressions with a low event to variable ratio, coefficients and standard errors can both be seriously biased (Peduzzi et al. 1996). Therefore, while it would be ideal to include a full set of all potentially relevant variables, I focus on my own model and the three alternative explanations (for a similar approach, see Chen [2007]).

To conduct the analysis of the correlates of indexation, I largely follow the methodology described by Nathaniel Beck and coauthors (1998) in employing a logit model with implementation of taxable wage base indexation as my outcome, as follows:

$$\log\left(\frac{P_{t,s}}{1 - P_{t,s}}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{t,s} + \beta_2 z_t.$$

The outcome is $P_{t,s}$, or the probability that state s indexes its taxable wage base in year t, which I model as a function of state-specific, time-varying characteristics x, as well as national, time-varying features z, which include a yearly time trend.[19] My unit of analysis is thus a state-year combination, and as is required by the event history analysis set-up, states remain in my sample until they index their taxable wage base. I use Huber-White corrected standard errors clustered at the state level unless otherwise noted. My data span 1964 to 2008, which is the longest period of time for which I could maximize continuous data availability for my independent variables. Still, even within this time period some of my variables do not have full coverage.

19. Specifying duration using a logged time trend produces substantively identical results.

TABLE 5. Descriptive Statistics for Indexation Event History Analysis (1964–2008)

Variable	Source	Observations	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Indexation dummy	DOL	1,794	.01	.10	0	1
Union membership	Hirsch et al. (2001)	1,794	18.07	8.84	2.30	44.80
Democratic control of veto points	Klarner (2013)	1,631	1.84	1.07	0	3
Indexed benefits dummy (one lag)	DOL	1,539	.48	.50	0	1
Taxable wage base/average wages	DOL	1,743	.42	.14	.13	.85
Neighboring state indexed dummy	DOL	1,794	.57	.49	0	1
State unemployment	BLS	1,186	5.93	2.05	2.30	17.40
National inflation rate	BLS	1,794	4.61	2.82	1.30	13.50
UI reserve ratio (one lag)	DOL	1,743	1.83	1.37	−.38	5.59
White, non-Hispanic share	CPS	1,151	.77	.15	.18	.99

Sources.—DOL = US Department of Labor, *Financial Data Handbook* 394; CPS = Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey; BLS = Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.

In this analysis, I only consider the first instance when states began indexing their taxable wage bases, and I do not consider instances when the states may have changed the provisions of their indexation formula, nor instances where states stopped (temporarily or not) indexing their wage bases, since the factors that converge to make a state first index its taxable wage base may be quite different from the factors that cause a state to change its indexation policy over time. Moreover, there is more variation in state UI finances between states with and without indexation than within the subset of states with indexation in place.

Descriptive statistics for each of the substantive variables are summarized in table 5, and table 6 presents the results of the regressions. First, consistent with the predictions of my own conceptual model, union membership, Democratic control of veto points, past benefit indexation, and the ratio of the taxable wage base to average wages are all strongly and positively correlated with adoption of UI indexation in model 1.[20] A state with complete Democratic control of legislative veto points has a predicted probability of indexation that is about five times higher than the probability of indexation for a state with complete Republican control, holding all

20. I focus on the levels of (as opposed to the changes in) these variables, since I am trying to capture the enduring effects of these features of the strategic context of UI policy making. At the advice of one of the reviewers, however, I explored whether these variables had effects both as levels and changes. I found that both benefit indexation and the ratio of the taxable wage base to average wages had statistically and substantively strong effects when entered as lagged variables and first-differenced variables simultaneously. This means that the move from unindexed to indexed benefits, as well as an increase in the ratio of the taxable wage base to average wages, had independent effects that increased the probability that states would index their taxable wage bases aside from the levels of those variables.

TABLE 6. Event History Analysis of State Unemployment Insurance Taxable Wage Base Indexation

Variable	Baseline (1)	Baseline with Interaction (2)	Diffusion (3)	Economic Conditions (4)	Race (5)	Full (6)
Union membership	.07*	.07*				.00008
	(.04)	(.04)				(.08)
Democratic control of veto points	.58*	.22				−.49
	(.23)	(.17)				(.50)
Benefits indexed (one lag)	2.90**	2.05+				.25
	(.97)	(1.06)				(1.10)
Taxable wage base/ average wages (one lag)	4.69*	4.67*		9.45**		8.30*
	(2.13)	(2.13)		(3.08)		(3.69)
Democratic control × benefits indexed		.39				.84
		(.28)				(.54)
Policy diffusion dummy			.62			.89
			(.53)			(.69)
State unemployment				.05		.13
				(.12)		(.11)
National inflation rate				−.11		−.10
				(.13)		(.13)
UI reserve ratio (one lag)				.08		.43
				(.35)		(.51)
White, non-Hispanic share					3.56	.94
					(3.40)	(5.30)
Year trend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	1,425	1,425	1,794	1,186	1,151	868

Note.—Robust standard errors (clustered at the state level) in parentheses below unstandardized logit coefficient estimates. Note that constants are not shown. Data are for 1964 to 2008.

+ $p < .10$

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

other variables at their observed values. Similarly, a state with the highest union density has a predicted probability of indexation that is nearly 20 times higher than a state with the lowest union density. Having benefits previously indexed and having a high ratio of the taxable wage base to average wages similarly increases the probability of indexation. Individual outlier states or years do not appear to be driving these results. Jackknifed estimates of the model, in which I successively leave out each state or year, produce similar results as the baseline model (results not shown). The results are also robust to estimating the model using the rare events correction method as proposed by Gary King and Langche Zeng (2001; results not shown).

Model 2 shows support for interactive effects between the political strength of UI advocates and policy legacies and framing, suggesting that policy legacies and framing matter more for Democrats than Republicans. An interaction between Democratic control of veto points and the existence of UI benefit indexation produces a substantively and statistically significant probability increase.[21] The positive effect of Democratic control of veto points on taxable wage base indexation appears to be driven entirely by states with previously indexed UI benefits. This suggests that having a favorable policy environment is an important precondition for advocates wishing to implement taxable wage base indexation.

Models 3–5 examine the three alternative theories of taxable wage indexation. In brief, I find no support for these other explanations. Model 3 finds no relationship between the policy diffusion variable and implementation of indexation, at least at conventional levels of statistical significance. Model 4 tests the relevance of economic conditions, and it finds no support for state unemployment, national inflation, or UI trust fund solvency as predictors of indexation. As before, the ratio of the taxable wage base to average wages is positively correlated with indexation, which is the opposite of what would be predicted by the economic conditions theory. Finally, I find no correlation between the racial composition of a state and implementation of taxable wage base indexation in model 5.[22]

I produce a fully specified estimation with all of the relevant variables in model 6. The interaction between prior benefit indexation and Democratic control of state veto points again produces statistically significant changes in the probability of indexation. Increasing the number of veto points held by Democrats from zero to three nearly triples the predicted probability of indexation, though only in states that previously indexed their benefits to wage growth. Increases in the ratio of the taxable wage base to average wages also independently produce statistically and substantively significant increases in the probability of indexation. No other variables appear to be statistically significant at conventional levels of significance.

21. Interactions between union membership and benefit indexation are not statistically significant at conventional levels, nor are interactions with the ratio of the taxable wage base to average wages.

22. I find stronger, but less robust, results for the African American share of the state's population. A larger African American population is negatively correlated with taxable wage base indexation, but this correlation disappears in the fully specified model.

Overall, then, these models provide strong evidence for the model of indexation I advance premised on control of veto points and policy design and framing. Consistent with the notion that indexation of the taxable wage base is necessary to prevent erosion of UI benefits through fiscal constriction, I find that indexation was most likely when UI advocates were in control of legislative veto points (or conversely, when UI opponents were not in control of those veto points) and when those UI advocates could successfully draw upon a favorable preexisting policy environment.

Two changes in the American political economy may help to explain why there have not been recent successful efforts at indexation of state taxable wage bases. First, union membership is in steep decline, weakening a key interest group that would lobby for indexation. Barry Hirsch and his coauthors report that union membership fell from 29 percent of nonagricultural wage and salary workers in 1964 to 12 percent in 2010 (2001). The decline of unions may directly reduce the probability of indexation and may also have indirect effects on the behavior of political parties toward UI policy, especially for Democrats. New research on parties emphasizes the central role that organized interests play in determining party policy positions. Thus it is plausible that as labor unions fall in power, their priorities are less likely to be reflected in the policies pursued by Democrats, including UI solvency improvement (see, e.g., Karol 2010; Bawn et al. 2012).

Second, the ratio of the taxable wage base to average wages has fallen dramatically in nonindexing states, giving opponents of the system an opportunity to frame taxable wage base indexation as a large tax hike on employers. Indeed, business groups at the state and national levels have employed precisely this logic to oppose further increases or indexation of state taxable wage bases. For example, the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce referenced the gap between the taxable wage base ($12,000 in 2012) and proposed increases to $20,000 or $25,000 as a "damaging 100 percent increase in Arkansas' UI taxes" (Hall 2011, 5). Similarly, the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) in Pennsylvania expressed strong opposition to President Obama's proposals to increase and index the federal taxable wage base, starting at $15,000, citing the large gap between that new base and Pennsylvania's base ($8,000 in 2012), and stating that, "it is difficult to imagine a more powerful disincentive to hiring new workers than a massive tax penalty for hiring new workers" (NFIB, n.d.).

At the national level, too, the US Chamber of Commerce opposed proposed increases in the taxable wage base in 1991—even when paired with

a reduction in employer tax rates—because of the large difference between the current taxable wage base and the new wage base. In Congressional testimony, the Chamber wrote: “The sponsors of H.R. 1367 propose a mammoth employer tax increase. They claim to balance this by a reduction in the tax rate, but the reduction does not even come close to offsetting a more than seven-fold multiplying of the wage base. . . . Even looking at the annualized average weekly wage . . . rather than the maximum taxable wage base, this increase will result in . . . a three-fold increase” (US House of Representatives, Ways and Means Committee 1991, 115). In the same Congressional hearing, a representative of the Council of State Chambers of Commerce bemoaned that the “increased taxes on employers by raising the wage base to an ever-escalating FICA tax base is [*sic*] enormous, even with gradual decreases in the FUTA tax. The 1992 tax increase for an employer with an average maximum wage base of $27,900 is 273 percent” (US House of Representatives, Ways and Means Committee 1991, 118). In each of these cases, employer groups who were opposed to increasing UI spending framed the tax increase associated with indexation and an increase in the taxable wage base in terms of the percentage difference between the old and the proposed tax base, a gap that had only grown larger precisely because of the lack of indexation in most states.

CONCLUSION

This article evaluates the correlates of long-term erosion in state UI finances and concludes that the largest contributors to variation in state UI trust fund solvency have been changes in UI taxes, not overly generous benefits or poor economic conditions. In particular, states are reducing the proportion of wages on which employers pay UI taxes. Diminishing UI trust fund solvency threatens the ability of the program to offer automatic stabilization to the economy and also means that states cannot make important expansions necessary to ensure that the program remains effective over time, thereby retrenching the program’s protections.

I characterize this phenomenon of deliberate erosion in a policy’s tax base as fiscal constriction, a strategy employed by opponents of a social program to achieve retrenchment through a deliberate failure to maintain a program’s tax base. Consistent with this concept of fiscal constriction, I find that, historically, indexation of a state’s taxable wage base was most

likely to occur in a state when advocates of more generous UI benefits controlled key veto points in the state legislative process; indexation was less likely to occur when advocates of UI retrenchment held those veto points and could stymie legislative action to improve solvency. But political strength has been insufficient on its own; advocates of more generous UI needed to be able to draw on favorable past policy and to avoid the possibility that indexation would be framed as a massive tax hike on employers. Together, these results suggest that future action to improve UI solvency through increased taxes (and tax bases in particular) is unlikely to occur at the state level in the absence of a federal intervention, since important advocates of UI tax base indexation are in decline and the proposals can be increasingly framed as requiring huge hikes in employer taxes.

Perhaps the most straightforward intervention would be for the federal government to index its own UI taxable wage base, which would set an indexed floor for all states to follow. Barring such a direct intervention, the federal government could also offer financial incentives to states that adopt reforms to improve UI solvency. One model for the federal government to consider might be the UI Modernization Program that Congress included in the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (commonly called the Stimulus). The Modernization Program offered states incentive payments to defray the costs of their UI programs if they adopted certain measures to improve access to UI benefits, especially for disadvantaged workers. In all, 39 states claimed at least some of their incentive payments, collectively passing a number of reforms that broaden eligibility for the program for an estimated 200,000 unemployed workers each year (NELP 2012). A similar incentive program might encourage states to improve their finances, especially through indexing their taxable wage bases.

In addition to suggesting options for future reform of the UI system, these findings highlight two specific areas of the American unemployment insurance system that deserve further study from scholars of social policy. First, more comparative historical work is needed to understand how individual states passed indexation and other UI tax reform legislation. Understanding the contextual features surrounding state-level changes to the UI system will be important to outlining the possibilities and requirements for future reform efforts. Second, future research ought to probe why the federal government failed to pass a requirement that all states index their taxable wage bases, and more generally, why no reforms to-

ward stronger national standards have succeeded in the UI system. Comparisons with Social Security would be especially useful here given that the Social Security tax base was ultimately indexed by Congress, while the unemployment insurance tax base was not. And even before Congress indexed the Social Security taxable wage base, it raised the base many more times than it did for unemployment insurance.

Finally, this study provides important lessons for students of the welfare state, and for policy makers more generally, about policy design and strategies for social benefit retrenchment. The work of Paul Pierson and his collaborators in the edited volume *The New Politics of the Welfare State* (Pierson 2001) had a major influence on the study of welfare state retrenchment. But one key recommendation of Pierson's work has gone unheeded: the need for researchers to focus on the "programmatic structure" (205) of policies, or details about a policy's eligibility, benefit, and financing provisions (see also Pierson 1995). Pierson's work emphasizes programmatic design as a crucial way that legislators could make changes to a policy, including cuts, in ways that were hard for the public and other actors to recognize. Recent work seeks to remedy that lacuna, focusing on the politics of benefit indexation in particular (see, e.g., Green-Pederson et al. [2013] and the edited volume more generally), but generally does not examine the politics of financing social benefits.

The concept of fiscal constriction that I introduce in this article is one that could be fruitfully applied to the financing mechanisms of other social programs aside from unemployment insurance, particularly other social insurance schemes. In this way, fiscal constriction provides an avenue for returning a focus to programmatic design and the ways that technical changes in policy parameters can result in gradual but ultimately substantial changes in those policies over time. More practically, the study of fiscal constriction provides insight for policy makers who wish to construct social programs that are durable over the long run. Legislators and advocates must be mindful of how sensitive their policies are to changes in the programs' tax bases; otherwise those programs may be prone to gradual erosion over time, as with American unemployment insurance.

NOTE

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opment of unemployment insurance, the politics of taxation in advanced economies, and the political mobilization of business. He acknowledges very helpful feedback from the journal's reviewers and editors, as well as participants in workshops at Harvard and the Tobin Project. He also acknowledges financial support from the National Science Foundation's Graduate Research Fellowship Program and the Tobin Project.

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The Role of the YWCA in the World War II Internment of Japanese Americans: A Cautionary Tale for Social Work

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ABSTRACT The Young Women's Christian Organization's work on behalf of approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans incarcerated in federal relocation camps during World War II was progressive in its vision of racial equality and courageous in its proactive, vocal consistency. The YWCA was unique among social work organizations in seeing the internment as an ethical, moral, and political challenge to the profession and to the national democracy. In its conviction of the necessity for assimilation, however, the YWCA functionally supported the racist stances it opposed: the military's rationale for the internment and Americanization schemes of eras past. Using primary archival records, this study outlines the scope of the YWCA's work and analyzes its well-intentioned but problematic role in the history of the internment. The history makes clear that even the deeds of conscientious and skilled individuals are not necessarily free of bias and partiality. This analysis seeks to bring this lesson to the fore.

INTRODUCTION

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) stands out as the most, and arguably the only, consistently proactive social work organization working for the welfare of Japanese Americans (henceforth, the "Nikkei") during the ignominious history of the internment, the federal government's removal and incarceration of approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II.[1] In the early "evacuation" period, during which the Nikkei were removed from their homes in California, Oregon, Washington,

1. "Nikkei" is an inclusive term used generally to refer to all Japanese émigrés and their descendants, and thus it does not distinguish between immigrants and US-born members of the community. Throughout this article, "Nikkei" will be used to indicate both Japanese immigrants

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and parts of Arizona, the federal government established and funded social services through the Public Assistance Board (Bureau of Public Assistance 1942). In the internment period that followed, the War Relocation Authority (WRA), under the auspices of the Department of War, managed the 10 relocation camps in which the Nikkei were incarcerated and operated social welfare assistance programs within those camps.[2] In the many "relocation" areas in the Midwest and the East Coast, to which the Nikkei were eventually sent out of the camps to resettle, state, county, and local social welfare departments and social service organizations executed federally funded relief programs and delivered the standard state and local welfare programs, for which some Nikkei were eligible (Park 2008). But among voluntary organizations without such contractual or legal obligations to the government, the YWCA was unique in dedicating full-time paid workers to the task. It established and funded programs within the camps, prodded and led other social work organizations to coordinate and provide crucial services to post-incarceration Nikkei scattered across the nation, and used its network of influential members to lobby and advocate for policies and legislation on behalf of the Nikkei. In stark contrast to the quiescence of major social welfare organizations such as the American Association of Social Workers (AASW) and the late entry and inconsistent participation of the National Social Welfare Assembly (NSWA), work with the Nikkei was perceived by the YWCA as "not . . . a thing merely that we can do; it seems a thing we *must* do" (Ellis and Wilkins 1942, 15).

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and US-born Japanese Americans in all instances where the original source does not dictate otherwise.

2. Terminology regarding the camps is both problematic and confusing. There were two different types of residential centers in which the Nikkei were incarcerated. The Nikkei were first sent to one of 16 assembly centers in the Pacific Coast states, and from there they were moved to one of 10 more permanent relocation camps in California, Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah. The term "concentration camps" is used by some authors, Nikkei and otherwise (Daniels 1972; Drinnon 1989; Nishimoto 1995; Hirabayashi 1999), to indicate these relocation camps. Both terms were also in use during the wartime period by both the Nikkei and others. Although the term "internment" is often used to describe the whole of the events, the relocation camps are not to be confused with the US Justice Department internment camps that imprisoned individually vetted enemy aliens (designated as individual security risks) and their family members, US citizens or otherwise, who elected to stay with the interned individual. Terms such as "resettlement," "relocation," and "evacuation," used officially to describe the processes of removal and incarceration, are similarly charged euphemisms and are considered by many to occlude the scope and nature of the events under discussion here.

The YWCA's established anti-racism stance (Lewis 2008) was central to the organization's willingness to identify publicly the wartime treatment of the Nikkei as an unambiguous manifestation of the larger societal problem of racism within the United States, and as a course of action that contradicted the nation's rationale for fighting the war. Mabel Ellis and Helen Wilkins of the YWCA's National Board explained:

> The means must have something to do with the end, if we are successfully to reach the goal desired; and talk of a whole group of peoples as the "yellow peril" and "yellow bellies," and of the continent of Australia, which our troops are helping to defend, as "a white man's country" have little to do with the ends we envision. Such talk as that, attitudes like that, raise legitimate question as to whether the struggle is a clash of rival imperialism fighting to preserve the status quo, with a double standard of democracy which limits its true applications to white men only, or in truth a struggle to preserve and extend democracy for all people. . . . And such talk as that—together with the American brand of anti-Semitism together with such acts as lynchings and race riots and all our other forms of racial discrimination—serves to aid the partners in the Axis when they try to convince the darker peoples of the world that America and the United nations cannot be given full credence when we state our war aims in terms of democracy. (Ellis and Wilkins 1942, 14)

The insistence that the nation could not "battle for democracy while denying it in clinging to practices of racial superiority" (Ellis and Wilkins 1942, 14) was an organizational stance decades in the making. By the Second World War, the YWCA had, in incremental steps, instituted changes in its organizational vision and practices that placed its approach to race relations well ahead of the dominant mores of the time. Its provision of a wide range of group work and case work services to women of all races, creeds, and nationalities and its public and consistent advocacy for racial equality and cultural pluralism, decades before the era of civil rights and the age of multiculturalism, also put the YWCA far ahead of its peers in social work.

However, as earnest and progressive as the YWCA's stance on race relations was for its time, it did not fundamentally challenge the racial logic of its era. Although the YWCA framed the internment as "a race problem in addition to being a result of war hysteria" and as an issue of "immense"

(Ellis 1942*b*, 9) significance for the nation, its vision for the Nikkei was an assimilationist path. Using archival data from multiple primary sources, this study analyzes the gap between the YWCA's broad-minded goals and courageous deeds and the problematic assumptions that undergirded them.[3]

This article outlines the YWCA's wartime work with the Nikkei and analyzes its aims and practices in the three major segments of the internment: the forced removal from the West Coast, the incarceration in long-term "relocation centers," and the planned scattering of the population in so-called resettlement or relocation areas in the Midwest and the East. The history of the YWCA as an early proponent of racially and culturally progressive social services is little known in social work; it deserves inclusion in the annals of social welfare history. Moreover, this critical examination of the organization's approach to race, culture, and exclusion contains lessons for today's social work, in which the persistent issues of racism, cultural imperialism, and the marginalization of minority populations have not disappeared and the methods with which to best eradicate them still remain unclear.

THE YWCA'S RACE AND IMMIGRATION WORK

The YWCA was born amid the mid-nineteeth-century evangelical Protestant religious revivals that swept the United States and England. "Be-

3. Primary sources examined for the study include the records of the YWCA of the U.S.A., located at Smith College; the records of the US War Relocation Authority and the Wartime Civilian Control Administration, located at the National Archives and Records Administration; the records of the California State Department of Social Welfare War Services Bureau and the Earl Warren Papers, located at the California State Archives; the records of the Oregon State Public Welfare Commission and the Governor Charles A. Sprague Collection, located at the Oregon State Archives; the records of the Public Welfare and Social Security Departments and the Governor Arthur B. Langlie Collection, located at the Washington State Archives; the records of multiple social work agencies and organizations, located at the Social Welfare History Archives and the Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota; the Hull House Collection and the records of the Immigrants' Protective League, at the University of Illinois at Chicago; the Grace Coyle Papers at the University Archives, Case Western Reserve University; the Japanese American Relocation Digital Archives and the Japanese American Relocation Reviewed Oral History Collection, at the University of California, Berkeley's Bancroft Library; and Densho, the Japanese American Legacy Project Digital Archives, based in Seattle, Washington.

ginning as a prayer circle with a vague goal of doing good," the Ladies Christian Association (LCU) of New York City was founded on the platform of "Christian sisterhood" (Robertson 2007, 13). By the early twentieth century, the initial focus on religious proselytizing and moral uplift had largely been replaced at the local level by the provision of social services for young women, who flocked to the cities in this era of mass industrial urbanization, and nationally by work on "such social issues as public health, labor reform, temperance, political reform, women's suffrage, [and] the peace movement" (Mohl 1982, 37).

In 1911, at the recommendation of its Bureau of Immigration and the Foreign–Born, the YWCA formed the first International Institute in New York City's immigrant-dense Greenwich Village (Mohl and Betten 1972).[4] Edith Terry Bremer, a young social welfare and settlement worker, formerly of the Federal Immigration Commission, led this experimental community center, which served newly arrived immigrant women. The Institute operated from the central tenet that "cultural pluralism [was] good for immigrants and also good for America" (Mohl 1982, 41), a developing ideal that contested the doctrine of Americanization, which was, whether implicitly or explicitly, a long-standing principle embedded in most social work programs with immigrants (Park 2006; Park and Kemp 2006).[5]

4. Branches of the International Institute were established in more than 60 industrial cities in the years following World War I. In the 1930s, most branches of the International Institute merged to form an independent national organization called the National Institute of Immigrant Welfare, with Edith Bremer continuing as its head. This became the American Federation of International Institutes in 1943, then merged with the Common Council for American Unity to create the American Council for Nationalities Service, which remains in operation today as the Immigration and Refugee Services of America (Sickels 1941; Mohl 1982).

5. While, as discussed below, the pluralism of the International Institutes was a limited vision, it was indeed a progressive move away from the reigning doctrine of Americanization. The Americanization movement was a vast enterprise undertaken by private and voluntary organizations, as well as state, municipal, and federal institutions, from the late nineteenth century through the first few decades of the twentieth century, a period coinciding with the Progressive Era. The main goals of Americanization, carried out mainly through the education of immigrants, were "the acquisition of the English language and American citizenship, and on the adoption of American customs, standards, and methods of life" (Hill 1919, 631). Competing theories and scientific methodologies for evaluating the moral, intellectual, political, and physical fitness of aliens for assimilation into American society and suitability for American citizenship were a major preoccupation of the period. Americanizability was a central conceptual frame for the determination of both admission/exclusion policies and the subsequent

Just as the emergent pluralism of the YWCA's International Institutes distinguished its work with the largely white European immigrants it served from that of many other immigrant-focused organizations, the segregated associations for racial minority women set apart the YWCA from so many organizations that did not serve such populations at all. The first African American YWCA branch opened in Dayton, Ohio, in 1890; the first YWCA for Native American women opened in Chilocco, Oklahoma, in 1894; the Japanese Branch of the Los Angeles YWCA opened in 1913. Thus, by the start of World War II, the YWCA had a well-established relationship with West Coast Nikkei communities. Thriving Japanese Associations were in operation in most large cities throughout the Coast, and "many of the Nisei (second generation) group [had] literally grown up within the walls of the Y.W.C.A." (YWCA of the U.S.A. 1942c, 1).

The historian Sara Lewis (2008) avers that the "events of World War II transformed the views of Y leaders about race relations, prompting changes that included the creation of a racially inclusive rhetoric that increasingly fused democratic principles with Christian tenets and a widening definition of interracial relations" (2). As influential as the war years were, the YWCA's progressive stance on race was derived, at least in part, from the principles of group work, in which the belief in the power of human association was coupled with "the value orientation of a commitment to social change" (Hartford 1983, 758). Indeed, the YWCA defined itself as "a group work agency"; as Dorothy Height, an African American social worker who joined the National Board in 1944 explained, group work for the YWCA was a democratic ideal, "an educational process aimed at the development, social adjustment and growth of the individual through voluntary group association and the use of this association as a means of furthering other socially desirable ends" (Height 1945, 390).

The YWCA held its first interracial conference in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1915, and beginning in the 1920s, the Association refused to hold its

treatment of immigrants allowed entry into the country. The Americanization Studies Series, funded by the Carnegie Corporation and published by Harper & Brothers Publishers in the 1920s, was intended to enumerate various methods and practices of Americanization. It offers a glimpse into the period's judgments of immigrants. Sophonisba Breckinridge's *New Homes for Old* (1921), Robert E. Park's *The Immigrant Press and Its Control* (1922), and the New York School's Kate Holladay Claghorn's *The Immigrant's Day in Court* (1923) were part of the series and serve as examples of social work and social science's participation in the enterprise.

conventions in legally segregated cities (Lewis 2008). During the Second World War, alongside its work with the incarcerated Nikkei, the YWCA "protested time and again against discrimination in the Armed Forces shown to Negroes, both men and women" (Harper 1945, 15) and advocated for the end of the absurd practice of segregated blood collection by the Red Cross. The YWCA also worked tirelessly to shift its own internal practices. The National Board voted in May of 1943 to officially remove race as a barrier to employment within the Associations (YWCA National Board, Community Division Committee 1943). In January of 1945, the board formally recommended the active promotion of the employment of minorities in professional positions in local Associations (YWCA National Board, Race Relations Subcommitee of the National Public Affairs Committee 1945a). At its historical March 1946 National Convention, the YWCA "unanimously voted to desegregate the entire organization" (Lewis 2008, 4).

As Ethel Bird of the National Board indicated in 1936, the YWCA envisioned both the minority Associations and the International Institutes as transitional measures necessitated by the exigencies of the present: "The fact is that the reason for having a Negro branch is exactly opposite of the reason for having an International Institute. In the former case, it is the dominant whites' lack of readiness to accept the people of color on equal terms. In the case of the immigrant group it is the lack of readiness of the nationality group" (1) to function as an integrated part of mainstream society. The YWCA worked to generate social conditions that did not yet exist: a shift in the general public's prejudiced views on racial minorities to obviate the need for segregated branches and assimilation on the part of white immigrants to obviate the need for the protective Institutes.

The YWCA's aim was the integration of both racial minorities and new immigrants into an inclusive democracy. But this desired "social integration" (Bird 1942, 1) was envisioned as a unidirectional shift. The YWCA saw itself as a link between minority communities and the general "Caucasian community" (Bird 1942, 1), but only as that which would shepherd the former to fit into, and be accepted by, the latter. While the YWCA imagined a vigorous and vibrant democratic nation in which all races would be included as viable and equal participants, it did not imagine that such inclusion could or should fundamentally reshape the community itself; the primacy of the "Caucasian community" was never questioned. It also did

not imagine that any minority group might, as would prove to be the case of the Nikkei in this wartime period, resist such an integrationist vision.

THE REMOVAL

Eight months prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, in April 1941, Ruth Crawford Mitchell reported the growing anxieties of the West Coast Nikkei in the YWCA's monthly periodical, the *Woman's Press*: "Every time there is a new spy scare or another bombing episode, every time diplomatic envoys exchange demanding notes, Japanese boys and girls feel thousands of curious eyes watching them closely. They keenly feel the unasked question: Are they Japanese or are they Americans? Are they loyal to the country of their birth, or to the land to which they trace their origin?" (165). Such fear quickly became actuality in the aftermath of Japan's December 7, 1942, attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States' entry into the Second World War on the following day. A swift series of presidential proclamations and executive orders established curfews, travel restrictions, and residential prohibitions under military rule. The Nikkei's living circumstances were further strained by public boycotts of Nikkei businesses (Watson 1941) and extralegal persecutions by both official bodies and private institutions. For instance, the California State Personnel Board expelled all Nikkei from civil service jobs (Myer 1943), and insurance companies revoked policies held by Nikkei (Watson 1941). The YWCA National Board's Civil Liberties Committee noted in mid-March that "in some places mob law is practically in effect" (1942, 2). On March 24, 1942, the military issued the first of a series of civilian exclusion orders that would clear the West Coast of the Nikkei by early August. On March 30, the approximately 250 Nikkei residents of Bainbridge Island, Washington, became the first group to be "evacuated" under a process of "controlled removal" (Bureau of Public Assistance 1942, 28).

As a result of continuous monitoring of the developing situation through reports from its West Coast Associations and a reconnaissance trip to assess the "YWCA's responsibility in the entire situation" (YWCA National Board, Race Relations Subcommitee of the National Public Affairs Committee 1942, 1) by Helen Flack and Elsie Harper of the Board's Race Relations Committee, the Board committed to work on two fronts. First, concluding that the YWCA "had a heavy responsibility in the field of public opinion" (Ellis 1942*a*, 1), the National Board assigned the task of

countering the virulent anti-Japanese racism and the attendant "danger of political exploitation and abuse" (Ellis 1942*a*, 1) through molding public opinion to the National Public Affairs Committee (Ellis 1942*a*). Influencing legislation and wartime policies "to guarantee the civil rights of this group" (Briesemeister 1946, 53) would be accomplished through various "machinery already set up for that purpose" (Lyle 1943, 7) as well, sub rosa, through members' networks within government and spheres of influence. The Race Relations Subcommittee of the National Public Affairs Committee would lead internal efforts to concretize the vision of the YWCA as an "organization in which differences do not divide" (Briesemeister 1946, 5). Second, the Board created the Japanese American Evacuation Project (JAEP) to address two more narrowly focused issues: "the psychological effect upon the Japanese who have been forced to leave their homes, businesses, friends, etc., and the effect upon American citizens of Japanese parentage who have been uprooted, despite their loyalty to the United States" and "the ultimate concern of living re-adjustments after war, for the Japanese" (YWCA National Board, Race Relations Subcommitee of the National Public Affairs Committee 1942, 1). West Coast YWCAs brought to the National Board's attention the anticipated psychological costs of the removal. The Los Angeles Japanese branch, for example, reported that "the younger girls are so concerned about the long-time results of this evacuation. They fear that they will become an 'outcast group' so that when they are free again to move about the country such fear and animosity will have grown up about them that they will be ostracized" (Ellis and Ingraham 1942, 189). In response, the Board voted on April 1, 1942, to establish and finance the JAEP, "a special emergency piece of work," which would "transplant its Japanese Branch to these new communities and continue a program there" (YWCA National Board, Community Division Committee 1942, 2).

The JAEP's "first emphasis was on helping the evacuees improve their living conditions within the centers, helping them to adjust to new conditions" (YWCA National Board, Community Division Committee 1944, 2) and to aid the Nikkei in resettlement in communities outside the camps. Its proposed programs were the "supervision of housing units for single and unattached women and girls" (YWCA of the U.S.A. 1942*a*, 260) to provide "protection and security which would normally come through a family unit" (YWCA National Board 1942, 2); "counseling, providing trained leadership (speaking the Japanese language) to deal with personal and family problems which are bound to arise" (YWCA National Board

1942, 2); and the "development of an educational and recreational program in the realm of arts, family relationships, work problems, religion and health" (YWCA of the U.S.A. 1942*b*).

Staff dedicated to the project included the director, Helen Flack, who is described as "a Western woman who understands local attitudes" (Watson 1942*a*, 1); Betty Lyle, an established Girl Reserves leader; and Esther Briesemeister, who had experience working with older girls and women. Annie Clo Watson, who for the bulk of the war would take leave from the International Institute to work on the JAEP, described them as "the best the Association has to offer" (Watson 1942*a*, 1). Mable B. Ellis, though not administratively tied to the JAEP, played a key role. A former secretary of the Committee on Refugees, she was assigned by the National Board to "act as liaison officer between the National Board and the Federal Government and within the National Board itself at the point of service to 'those who because of racial and nationality background will have the greatest difficulties at this time'" (Watson 1942*a*, 1).

INCARCERATION

DEVELOPING CAMP CHAPTERS

In July of 1942, Ellis, in her role as liaison to the federal government, met to discuss the YWCA goals for the camps with Grace Coyle, a group work pioneer then serving as the head of the Welfare Section in the Washington headquarters of the WRA. Ellis's report (1942*c*) sketches a hesitant Coyle, who hoped that "something can be done by private organizations" (2) such as the YWCA but was skeptical of both the YWCA's motives and capabilities. Coyle reiterated the "fear felt by some of the War Relocation Authority staff of so-called proselytizing or attempts to exploit the Japanese for the sake of boosting the prestige of the private agency" (2). Emphasizing the WRA's general policy "to have the Japanese themselves determine what is to be done in the relocation Centers," she warned against "pressing too hard" to be allowed in the camps and made clear "that Caucasian consultants would be allowed in the Relocation Centers for short periods only and not too often" (2).

Ellis, however, arrived armed with written requests for YWCA services from Nell Findley, chief of community services at the Poston Relocation Camp, and Elmer Shirrell, chief of community services at Tule Lake Relocation Camp (Ellis 1942*c*). Esther Briesemeister explained in a 1946

pamphlet on the JAEP that "the national YWCA did not send a representative to any relocation center until a request had come from the residents stating their desire to have a YWCA and asking for the services of the national staff. A visit to the center was then put into the travel schedule and the secretary working in these communities began an active correspondence with those most interested in starting the organization" (Briesemeister 1946, 12). The visits began with meetings with members of the administration, such as the project director, the director of community services, the director of community activities, and the superintendent and principals of the of camp schools, as well as with Nikkei religious and secular leaders, which "made it possible to gauge community attitudes in preparation for the meeting where representatives from the various community groups were to discuss the possibility of starting a YWCA" (12). Such meetings, moreover, established crucial relationships that would allow the fieldworkers to continuously track the shifting "community patterns" (12) within the camps. As Briesemeister explained, "a worker had to try to keep up with political and social developments. The authority to represent the majority of the people rests in a variety of different places. It was important to know who the 'behind the scenes' groups were if possible" (21).

Coyle also forewarned that the YWCA would have great difficulties in finding able personnel among the incarcerated Nikkei; she identified only seven individuals with professional experience and training in casework and seven others with experience in group work. Establishing Nikkei leadership for YWCA programs would indeed prove difficult to maintain, especially as the WRA's resettlement program began funneling the skilled Nisei out of the camps. The YWCA's work was, however, facilitated by the many Nikkei and Caucasian administrative staffers (or their wives) who came to the camps with established YWCA ties. These included Varina Merritt, a former YWCA board member in the San Francisco Bay Area and the wife of the Manzanar Center director. Margaret D'Ille, a Japanese-speaking social worker who eventually became the director of Manzanar's Welfare Division, had a decade of experience as executive secretary for the YWCA in Japan (Woodsmall 1942). Granada's Catherine Ludy, a junior high school teacher, and Grace Lewis, a high school teacher, were former Girl Reserve club advisers (North 1942). Mrs. Herbert Walther, wife of Granada's junior high school principal, had been a public affairs chairman in the Denver Association (Briesemeister 1942*b*). Many such women, who were "vitally interested in this whole question of democracy and its ap-

parent breakdown in regard to the Japanese evacuation" (Briesemeister 1942*b*, 4), were scattered throughout the 10 camps and were tapped to provide leadership and guidance.

There were also many Nikkei women with previous YWCA experience. Several leaders from the Los Angeles Japanese Branch were at Granada: these included Mrs. Takayama, a former member of the Board of Directors (Briesemeister 1944*a*); Sumi Kashiwagi and Mrs. Yamasaki, both of whom had served as "chairman of the committee of management" (Mukaye 1942, 4); and Hana Uno, a Girl Reserves adviser (North 1942). Sophie Torimui, a Girl Reserves secretary at the same Los Angeles branch, was at Heart Mountain (Nakamura 1942). Granada also boasted Yuri Domoto, a former caseworker in the Alameda (California) County Welfare Department who had been an active member of the Student YWCA at University of California, Berkeley (Mukaye 1942). Six women at Jerome had YWCA experience (Briesemeister 1943*c*). Topaz had an estimated 300 former members of the San Francisco YWCA and 25–50 members of the University of California YWCA (Hayashi 1942).

The YWCA chapters, eventually established in all 10 relocation camps and one internment camp in Crystal City, Texas, replicated local associations and clubs, including Girl Reserves for young girls, Business Clubs, and Young Matrons' clubs for the older girls and women. These membership club programs aimed to thwart both the tedium of incarcerated life and the various social ills predicted to arise from these "abnormal communities" (Briesemeister 1946, 21) in which the "stabilizing influence" (YWCA of the U.S.A. 1942*c*, 1) of family life was severely compromised. The YWCA surmised that the lives of women, without household duties to anchor their lives and "lack of interesting work to replace the usual home responsibilities" (Lyle 1943, 1), were particularly altered in the unhealthy "mass living" situation of the camps. The JAEP intended for the clubs to provide "a constructive influence in the building of morale, the development of leadership, personal growth and the taking of responsibility as citizens of the community" (YWCA National Board 1942, 3).

One indication of the JAEP's influence in the camps was its remarkable ability to claim dedicated spaces in the overcrowded camps. Despite the extreme shortages in housing that beleaguered every camp, the YWCA managed to establish separate dormitories for single girls and women and successfully lobbied to establish dedicated facilities in each camp for "club meetings, informal social activities, small discussion groups, and etc." (Briese-

meister 1943*e*, 4). Usually furnished through in-kind donations from outside associations, funding from the National Board, and the labor and creativity of the Nikkei membership, the clubhouses became multifunctional spaces. For example, according to Briesemeister, at Manzanar: "The clubhouse and dormitory are the two brightest spots in the community and the only places with comfortable chairs, gay curtains and a sense of home. The clubhouse is used all of the time, either by YWCA groups or other community groups. It is the scene of many weddings, receptions, etc." (Briesemeister 1943*d*, 2). Tule Lake had two "1/2 buildings in different sections of the community" (Briesemeister 1943*e*, 3) that were furnished with the help of the San Francisco YWCA (Reith 1943*b*, 13). The curtains "made of two shades of blue denim" (Briesemeister 1943*b*, 1) at the Amache (Granada) clubhouse, "by far the most attractive and best equipped YWCA building" (Briesemeister 1943*b*, 1), were sent by the YWCA in Pueblo, Colorado. The Denver YWCA's Thursday Night Club provided construction paper and other office supplies. "I was there four nights and the building was filled to capacity each evening," with a variety co-ed programs for youth and adults, noted Briesemeister (1943*b*, 1).

CLUB ACTIVITIES

The core YWCA programs consisted of membership groups for "girls from twelve years of age up—Girl Reserve program for school girls, business and industrial program for girls above high school age and home women's program" (Flack 1942, 1). Multiple groups, such as Girl Reserves, Business and Professional clubs, Matrons groups, and in some camps such as Granada, dedicated groups for Issei Women, were established in the camps.[6] The YWCA's method was to aid the club members in developing a program of activities "based on [the] interests and initiative of the group in the realm of arts, family relationships, work problems, religion, health and recreation" (Flack 1942, 1); the JAEP field-workers provided ongoing support through frequent visits and continuous correspondence. At its first year anniversary in July 1943, the Manzanar YWCA reported a total of 30 clubs in operation

6. "Issei," meaning first generation, is a term used in the Nikkei community to designate the first generation of immigrants from Japan. Their children born in the United States are referred to as the "Nisei" (second generation), and their grandchildren, the "Sansei" (third generation).

(Kusayanagi 1943). The Girl Reserves, the largest of the groups, emphasized members' "character development while in their most impressionable ages" (Morimitsu and Waller 1942, 7) in order to aid them to "discover inner security and confidence" (Reith 1943*b*, 3). Unlike the Girl Reserves, the Matrons' groups at the various camps were usually composed of a mixed group of "the wives of the administrative workers and the colonists" (Amache Young Women's Christian Association 1942, 1). Often hosted by a female staff member or the wife of an administrator in her home, they were likely the only settings in which the Nikkei and the Caucasians met regularly on at least theoretically equal footing within the camps. The Business and Professional Club attracted older girls and women interested in pursuing professional careers. The members at Topaz, for example, were said to be "a highly skilled group—teachers, social workers, stenographers etc." (Sharpley 1943, 3), many of whom were employed in the camp's social welfare department (Reith 1943*a*, 2) and were interested in preparing for jobs outside.

While total club membership numbers are difficult to estimate, some sense of the scale can be gauged from the archived records: in the summer of 1942, early in its development, the Tule Lake chapter reported that a total of 90 girls were involved in the Reserves (Morimitsu and Waller 1942, 7).[7] Sally Kusayanagi (1943), the general secretary of the Manzanar YWCA, reported that a year after its inception, membership totaled 539. Approximately 80 women reportedly attended the Young Matron's meeting at Manzanar in late July of 1942, and an estimated 300 attended the Older Women's meeting in early August (Briesemeister and Flack 1942). Amache reported in June of 1943 that a total of 407 girls and women were members of various YWCA groups (Amache Young Women's Christian Association 1943, 2).

Club activities were varied, with "a great deal of emphasis on social recreation group activities" (Lyle 1943, 2). Ethlyn Christensen (1944) re-

7. Each camp differed in total population numbers, and these numbers often fluctuated. The peak ranged from 7,318 in Granada to 18,789 in Tule Lake. The camps opened at different times, from March 1942 (Manzanar) to October 1942 (Jerome), and also closed at different times. There were transfers between the camps, and in the aftermath of the registration and of the loyalty debacle, a large transfer of population from many camps to Tule Lake, which was designated a detention facility for the disloyal. The Tule Lake citation here by Arthur Morimitsu and Theodore Waller covers the period between May 27 and July 20, 1942. Tule Lake received its first inmates on May 27, so the camp was just beginning its population growth. For detailed information on the camps and their population, see Burton et al. (2000).

ported that a children's Halloween party at Heart Mountain organized by the camp YWCA, "using group work methods and techniques," was attended by an estimated 2,000 children and won the group "recognition throughout the center" (6). Observing that the attendees of dances held in the camp's high school seemed to have "lost some of the buoyancy of young people," Christensen organized dance lessons for the youth: "I discovered a couple who were good at doing the jitterbug, and I suggested to Miss Kawakame and our club advisors that they organize some dancing classes and ask this couple to give instructions. Young people are going to need the security of feeling they can dance like those outside the centers. (I was surprised to find that I was encouraging anyone to learn to jitterbug)" (6). More often, social recreation programs were small-scale events like the Granada Young Matrons' meetings of "refreshments and a program with discussions" (Wygel 1943, 5), casual occasions in which relationships were built and "many thoughts and ideas are exchanged on clothing, diet, housing, behavior and various other problems of the children" (Amache Young Women's Christian Association 1942, 1). Poston social worker Lou E. Butler's detailed description (1943) of a similar meeting of the Business and Professional Club provides an affecting glimpse into the creative efforts of the women to enhance their grim surroundings:

> There were 12 or 15 girls present. The subject discussed was interior decorations. All were interested in the simple suggestions exchanged to help make the barracks apartments more comfortable and homelike. The leader of the discussion is a Japanese-American girl who teaches art in the elementary schools. Some of the suggestions were—use of corrugated pasteboard on the walls to cover the cracks and make the rooms warmer in winter and cooler in summer; the use of Standard Oil Co. pictures on the walls; the careful placement of furniture to make the room larger or to help screen off the bedroom space from the living space; the use of cups and other dishes as decoration. The girl in whose home we met had some colorful dishes and she had them placed in an orange crate nailed to the wall as to form shelves. (Butler 1943, 1)

The clubs also engaged in service work. They operated United Service Organization (U.S.O.) canteens established in several camps for Nikkei soldiers on leave; made decorative curtains for camp hospital wards (Amache Young Women's Christian Association 1943, 3); and organized fundraisers such as the Topaz Senior Girl Reserve event, which Marion Brown

Reith (1943*a*) described as follows: "About thirty enthusiastic girls gather at 4 o'clock. They were jubilant over the success of the pie and punch sale. They had made 110 pies with hard work and material saved from the mess hall. They netted $65 and were presenting it to the Scholarship Aid Fund" (2).

Advocacy and community organizing were also part of the program: the Issei Women's group at Granada "affected the move of a whole block which was later used for school—their beneficial influence caused the removal of these residents without opposition" (Amache Young Women's Christian Association 1942, 1). Educational programs on topics designed to aid in improving camp life and prepare for the outside abounded in the camps. The following were reported as having taken place or as being planned in the camps: educational programs on topics designed to aid in improving camp life and prepare for the outside abounded in the camps; lectures on health issues by the camp doctors; American history lessons for the Issei; sex education for teenagers; girls' discussions groups on personality, appearance, and etiquette; courses on group work; adolescent psychology; and discussions on the ideal community, resettlement, and family relations for the older population.

NAVIGATING CONFLICTS

In setting up and supporting all such activities, field-workers had to navigate conflicts of varying degrees that existed among the Nikkei, among the staff, and between the two groups in every camp. The field-workers repeatedly noted that in order to accomplish their programmatic goals, it was crucial to "not become identified with any of the factional groups" (Briesemeister 1943*d*, 2) that had developed among the camp populations yet "maintain an identification with all of these people" (Briesemeister 1946, 21), both inmates and staff. This was an inherently difficult task and was further complicated by the YWCA's ambivalent relationship with the WRA, as well as by the contradictions inherent in its own approach to and understanding of the Nikkei. But the field-workers were remarkably skilled at navigating the turbulent politics of the camps. The YWCA's claim to have been "the one organization that has weathered all of the storms" (Briesemeister 1943*d*, 2) was not an empty boast. For instance, the JAEP worked at Tule Lake in the aftermath of the "loyalty questionnaire," an administrative debacle that churned violently through the 10 camps, split-

ting apart families and communities for generations to come.[8] During the sometimes violent period of protests and work strikes that the registration triggered, the JAEP, like all other organizations, suspended its work at Tule Lake. But in February 1944, a year after the start of registration, the organization reestablished its contacts at Tule Lake to become the "only outside organization working there" (Briesemeister and Wilbur 1945, 2). The reentry, accomplished despite the opposition of the camp's own administrative staff, required maneuvering to bring "official pressure" (Briesemeister 1946, 34) down from the WRA headquarters in Washington. This was typical of the way that the YWCA worked. When deemed necessary, the well-connected National Board did not shy away from using its considerable social capital, from both personal networks and a sound organizational reputation, to push its aims. But the JAEP field-workers also practiced a great deal of tact in their on-the-ground work among the wary camp staff, who were resentful of being "constantly on the spot from the point of view of the colonists who are critical of the administration" as well as from "the point of view of the country at large" (Briesemeister and Wilbur 1945, 2) that criticized the administration for being too lenient.

Conflict between the Nikkei inmates and the WRA staff, often referred to as simply the "Caucasians" (Briesemeister 1942*a*, 1), was endemic to all camps. The staff-Nikkei relations ranged from the "particularly fine attitude" (Briesemeister 1942*c*, 1) found in Minidoka to Tule Lake, where the relations were said to be frankly "bad" (Briesemeister and Wilbur 1945, 1). In the field-workers' assessment, two related factors shaped the quality of the relations: the level of "informal contacts so valuable in building rap-

8. Beginning in February 1943, every adult resident in the camps was required to complete a registration questionnaire for the use of the War Department and the WRA. The infamous Questions 27 and 28 asked, first, the Nikkei's willingness to serve in the US military, and second, their unqualified allegiance to the United States, accompanied by the repudiation of any form of allegiance to the Japanese emperor or any other foreign power. A full discussion of the gut-wrenching complexity these seemingly straightforward questions posed for the Nikkei cannot be accomplished here. But for the Nisei US-born citizens who had been summarily declared enemy aliens at the start of the war—and for the Issei—barred by a federal law from obtaining naturalized citizenship because of their race—both incarcerated without adjudication and, as the Nikkei believed, in violation of their constitutional rights—the questions posed with no information on what the answers would trigger were both bewildering and appallingly offensive. In the end, the total of 6,700 who answered "no" to the two questions, whether out of personal conviction or political protest or out of desire, obligation, or pressure to remain with family members, were segregated at Tule Lake (Daniels 1972).

port" (Reith 1943*c*, 1) between the two groups and the attitude of the staff toward the inmates. At Topaz, a camp where staff housing was located near that of the inmates and where the children of both groups went to the same school, "social relations seem to be considerably better" than in other camps (US War Relocation Authority 1943*e*, 1).[9] In camps where the Caucasians did not live in the camps, opting instead for housing in nearby towns, or worse still, in camps such as Gila River where "many rules and regulations" (Briesemeister 1943*a*, 2) were instituted by the administration to specifically prevent social interactions between the Caucasians and inmates, relations were far more strained.

Certain individuals, such as Margaret D'Ille of Manzanar's Welfare Department, who "showed an unusual combination of sympathy and understanding with objectivity and common sense" (Woodsmall 1942, 2), were reported to represent a positive influence on community relations.[10] Hugo Walter, the head of community activities at Gila River, was a person with "a real concern for the colonists," who was "doing his utmost (in a quiet way) to build rapport" (Reith 1943*c*, 1). The "very different viewpoint" (Reith 1943*c*, 1) Walter was said to bring to the mix stood in stark contrast to that of the majority of staff in the camps, many of whom "favored the theory that the best way to govern the 'Nips' and 'Japs,' as some of the staff called the residents, was to issue orders, 'be tough with them'" (Yasumura 1945, 2), or were "not interested in the people, are afraid of some and are primarily interested in drawing their paychecks" (Briesemeister and Wilbur 1945, 1).

The "abnormal communities" (21) of the camps were located in some of the most hostile terrains in the United States. Marnette Wood Chestnutt, a YWCA visitor, described the Jerome Camp in January: "That these evacuees have been put on such poor land, today mud ankle deep everywhere, next summer heat unrelieved by trees or shaded porches, is a crime against justice and mercy. That Arkansas should have entered into the arrangement makes me bow my head in shame. Beauty of natural surroundings might compensate somewhat, at least at times assuage the hurt, but the ugliness of the out of doors there today took the courage of a mar-

9. For a discussion of the Caucasian-evacuee relationship, see Spicer et al. (1969, 83–88).

10. Ironically, this report is dated only a few days before Nikkei demonstrators at Manzanar are dispersed with tear gas and then fired upon by military police, with two Nikkei killed as a result.

tyr to bear" (Chestnutt 1943, 2). These remote and inclement settings were difficult places to staff, and the motley mix of "social workers, missionaries, school teachers, other government people" (21) who came to work in them did so for a set of widely divergent reasons that did not add up to easy community unity:

> Some were interested in the sociological aspects of the problems and many came on the staffs with this interest, to accumulate data for future papers, etc. Another rather large group represents the former WPA and other emergency government agency employees who transferred to these projects. A few came primarily for the increase in pay which it offered them and had little interest in the whole program. Another rather small group are the Pacifists who felt that working in the centers offered them an opportunity to serve and to make their contributions at this time. (Briesemeister 1946, 8)

According to Mrs. Roscoe Bell, wife of the Topaz camp's chief of community services and an employee in the Housing Unit of the Welfare Section, "competition, departmental jealousy, and pettiness were rife" in the camps, and "the discord and lack of cooperation among the Japanese was a reflection of the disunity among the Caucasians" (Sharpley 1943, 4). Although she intended to describe the effects of camp life on the Nikkei, Briesemeister's (1946) assessment that inmates' perspectives had "become very narrow with a great deal of emphasis put on their own individual problems" (20) also aptly described the Caucasians. Lilian Sharpley's (1943) reflections on Topaz, that she had "never seen a place where a group work program was needed so badly—for morale, group understanding of problems and leadership development" (4), was a commentary not only on the state of the Nikkei but that of the Caucasians, as well as the divided community that the two groups comprised. The YWCA field-workers saw their work as a vital necessity for the health of the community as a whole. Navigating the diversity among the Nikkei was also a difficult task, and it was one in which the field-workers were not altogether successful. While the YWCA's familiarity with the Nikkei population was a claim that no other social work organization—except perhaps its offshoot organization the International Institutes—could remotely match, its assertion that it "knows these people intimately" (YWCA National Board 1942, 2) was not wholly

justified. The YWCA's established ties were predominately with the Nisei, the US-born second generation, who made up the bulk of the YWCA's Nikkei membership, not the immigrant Issei. More specifically, the familiarity lay in its contact with the urban Protestant Nisei, concentrated in the Japan-towns of cities such as Los Angeles and San Francisco. While the YWCA saw itself as an organization committed to "integrating all sects of faiths, Christian and non-Christian into an American way of life based on Christian ideals" (YWCA National Board 1942, 1), whose programs welcomed all creeds, faiths, and denominations, the Nikkei groups within the camps did not always share this ecumenical view. Protestant groups emphasized the religious aspects of the organization, and the Catholic and the Buddhist groups saw the YWCA as a threat to the work they were doing with the Nisei. In some centers both churches "told their girls not to join Y clubs and in one center the Catholics circulated leaflets against the YWCA" (Briesemeister 1946, 11).

Such initial resistance to the YWCA did erode somewhat over time, but despite the best intentions of the field-workers, the camp chapters remained largely populated by its prewar base, the urban Protestant Nisei. Religion did remain a barrier. Lucy Nakamura of Heart Mountain reported in late 1942 that there were "many Buddhist girls here who still feel that a YWCA is purely for Christian girls and that even if they did join the Y, their parents object for religious reasons" (Nakamura 1942, 1). More subtly, the YWCA's ideals for leadership and participation implicitly valorized the types of middle-class womanhood best exemplified by the more assimilated and less "Japanese" urban populations. The field-workers tended to see women from rural communities, such as those from Merced, California, as a population who "speaks more Japanese and are less articulate" (Briesemeister and North 1942, 3) and thus less desirable as leaders. The field-worker Lillie Roudabush's description of a newly hired secretary for the Tule Lake YWCA, a woman whose qualifications Roudabush confessed to finding less than impressive, gives some sense of the YWCA's evaluative criteria:

> She is an intelligent-looking girl who would be an appealing person to young girls. She has had two years of H.S. education, speaks English rather better than you would expect, speaks Japanese only sketchily, but enough to explain herself to Issei mothers, she says. Her house was not spic and span,

> but she didn't know she was having company. Her furniture showed some evidence of some taste and of having had better things in a former period of her life. She has had business experience in the cleaning and laundry business before evacuation. (Roudabush 1944, 1)

Arguably the most difficult of the diplomatic tightropes the JAEP walked was "to establish an identification with the evacuees and also at times with the government" (Briesemeister 1946, 21). As an outside agency operating in the camps under WRA sufferance, it was essential for the JAEP to retain a smooth working relationship with the administration. But in order for it to maintain the trust of the Nikkei as well, it was equally imperative "not to endanger the relationship with the evacuee population by seeming to be a tool of the government" (21). Briesemeister explained that because the Nikkei "were quick to sense whether or not the personnel were sympathetic or hostile toward them and cooperated accordingly" and were "especially good at setting up a passive resistant non-cooperative attitude that made it impossible for certain branches of the Administration to function" (Briesemeister 1946, 11), the Caucasian staff tended to look to the field-workers to apprise them of "attitudes of the evacuees and trends in the life of the center" (21). The field-workers opted for non-confrontational avoidance: "A person working in this kind of a situation learns a lot, uses what she can for the further development of her progress and forgets a lot" (21).

Briesemeister also noted that it was "important not to exploit" the fact that as representatives of an outside private agency, the field-workers "were readily accepted and in many cases were able to accomplish some things that the government workers could not do" (21). Where it felt necessary, the field-workers did push back against the administration, as in the case of Gila River: "In talking with Mrs. Terry, wife of Project Attorney, regarding YWCA Board and Caucasian participation, she stated that the Project Director might object unless we said the Caucasians were to act in a supervisory capacity. I stated that the YWCA would not be interested in working on that basis and that I doubted that we would ask the director how to organize our Board" (Briesemeister 1943*a*, 8). But while the YWCA's philosophical outlook on the population and administrative methods practiced with them differed often from those of the WRA, in their basic goals for the future of the Nikkei, the two organizations were entirely aligned. As

will be discussed in further detail in the section on resettlement to follow, the two groups shared the ideals of assimilative resettlement. Notwithstanding their unwillingness to exploit their trusted outsider status, in service of this shared objective, therefore, the JAEP workers carried out in the camps many programs and projects that the WRA could not have accomplished as easily or accomplished at all without their aid. Because such activities were congruent with its own goals, however, the YWCA did not see them as examples of exploitation.

KEEPING CONTACT

The JAEP also had a project to enable the Nikkei to maintain links to the outside world through "keeping alive old connections and establishing new relationships with the membership and the ongoing activities of YWCAs which are within reasonable reach of the relocation centers" (Watson 1943*a*, 198). The field-workers were frequent visitors, making, for example, 61 visits to the camps between August 1942 and September 1943 (Lyle 1943). Girl Reserves in seven camps participated in a "Letter-Friend" (Lyle 1943, 3) pen-pal project with 57 of their counterparts in 21 states. The JAEP also established friendly visiting relations with local Associations, which had been kept informed about the Nikkei and the camp chapters through the YWCA's national Public Affairs Bulletins.

> At the G.R. [Girl Reserves] rally in the center, about 80 Caucasians from the surrounding communities attended among whom were the parents. The mothers were invited to a matron's meeting the next afternoon scheduled in the center. In the heavy rain many women came to this meeting and had a very enjoyable afternoon exchanging news and getting acquainted. The center women are now invited to the Christmas Bazaar which will be held by the Caucasian women. Materials for the kindergarten were sent in by these women. (Amache Young Women's Christian Association 1942, 1)

A Minidokan YWCA member described the first visit of YWCA women from the surrounding communities: "They have won our appreciation from the day they appeared at our first tea bearing armloads of fall blossoms in containers. It was the most heartening sight for flower-loving people who had neither seen nor touched a flower since coming to a

strange camp with nothing to see but endless miles of sagebrush" (Suzuki 1943, 1). The JAEP also arranged for dozens of Nikkei girls and women from various camps to attend YWCA gatherings such as regional and national conferences and leadership workshops on the outside, an endeavor that required the nonnegligible task of engineering cooperation between the WRA and local Associations. These projects, described in characteristic YWCA rhetoric as "leadership from the centers . . . finding ways to make contributions to outside Associations" (Lyle 1943, 3), were said to have made deep impressions on the participants: "Statements from the delegates themselves show how much the experience meant to them in the way of restoring their faith and hope and courage, their sense of personal dignity and worth. It was also effective in raising the morale in the whole population of the center and encouraging the relocation program" (Lyle 1943, 3). Miya Kikuchi, the enthusiastic head of the Manzanar YWCA, who "had been released" (Woodsmall 1942, 4) to attend a YWCA conference in Chicago, concurred:

> You can easily realize how our young people after sitting for five or six months in this hot desert center have come gradually to just sit back and vegetate. Many have lost all ambition or interest. Many are fearful of venturing forth from the protection and drab dreariness of this place. All of them feel that the whole world has forgotten them and cares nothing about them. However, I ensure that my report of this trip will give them courage and relight a spark of interest hold them to once again take up the threads of life. Old people can be helped through my visit to dispel their fears and letting the young people go out into the world. It will brighten the lives and heighten the hopes and interests of everyone. I am not saying this as just wishful thinking. (Kikuchi 1942, 7)

Whether or not such reports had the kind of revivifying effect she predicted, the experiences of the travelers were closely noted by the camp community, especially as the prospect of leaving the camps for resettlement, or "permanent relocation" in the WRA terminology, began to loom large. A young Nikkei delegate to an April 1943 leadership workshop in Jackson, Mississippi, wrote that the first question "everyone asked" when she returned from her trip was "'How did they like you?' They are eager to know how we were greeted" (Briesemeister 1946, 30).

These multiple modes of Nikkei-Caucasian "exchange of association" (Amache Young Women's Christian Association 1942, 1) were intended to achieve this exact effect. The JAEP saw "this relationship with the outside group as a definite help in relocating people from the centers" (Briesemeister 1946, 12). The controlled ventures outside by a handpicked group of Nikkei women would aid not only in raising community morale and providing personal satisfaction to those involved, but ultimately in moderating the Nikkei's fear of a hostile outside reception. Familiarizing the YWCA base outside the camps to the Nikkei women would aid in "building constructive community attitudes regarding the Japanese" (Flack 1943, 1), necessary to the eventual, successful integration of the Nikkei into the outside world. For the camp administration, whose success would "be measured by decrease in Center population" (Briesemeister 1942*b*, 1) once the resettlement push began in earnest, and to the JAEP staff, heavily invested in ensuring for the Nikkei the smoothest transition and integration into the outside world, the possibility that not only the YWCA members but the camp community as a whole might be "heartened and made less afraid of relocation because of the way in which the [five] delegates were received in the outside world" (Alway 1943, 5) was a significant incentive.

THE SCATTERING

The WRA instituted various measures to move the Nikkei out of the camps almost as soon as the camps opened.[11] Workers were released on a temporary basis to large agricultural interests in the Inter-Mountain States

11. The West Coast remained closed to the Nikkei until December 17, 1944, when the West Coast Exclusion Order was rescinded. There are many different rationales for why a population deemed dangerous enough to incarcerate wholesale could be released through the various (temporary, seasonal, indefinite) measures, and the differences depend on the perspective of the writer. The work releases had to do with the fact that there was a desperate shortage of agricultural labor and the Bracero Program, intended to address the shortage, took a while to get into place. The student relocation program was accomplished through the advocacy of the American Friends Service Committee and many educators. See the perspective of Dillon Myer, the director of the WRA, in Myer (1943). The WRA's espoused perspective was that the Relocation Camps were never intended to be long-term internment camps or places of confinement (US War Relocation Authority 1943). See also http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Resettlement/.

desperate for workers to harvest sugar beet and to perform other types of farm work (US Civil Service Commission 1943). Nisei men left for war, both as draftees and as volunteers in the all-Nikkei 442nd Regimental Combat Team (US War Relocation Authority 1946). Through the National Japanese American Student Relocation Council organized by the American Friends Service Committee, college-age youth left for schools in the East and the Midwest. Most importantly, in early autumn of 1942, the WRA instituted its program for "permanent relocation" (Briesemeister 1946, 38). A Relocation Division was established in each camp, and regional Relocation Offices to facilitate the process were opened in target areas such as Chicago, Denver, Cleveland, and Salt Lake City (US War Relocation Authority 1943*g*). The WRA imposed a harsh schedule: "An ideal relocation program would have everyone relocated before June 30, 1944, that is, within the next year. To do this would require the relocation of Center residents at the rate of about 7,500 per month" (US War Relocation Authority 1943*b*, 1). Henceforth, all activities within the camps would be geared to support this goal.[12]

COOPERATING WITH THE WRA

Along with the Federal Council of Churches, the YWCA was one of only two organizations invited by the chief of the WRA's Relocation Division to tour target resettlement areas and "sample the reaction of the Middle West to the idea of receiving the Japanese and giving them jobs" (Briesemeister 1946, 38).[13] The WRA counted on the YWCA's cooperation in both encouraging the Nikkei to leave the centers and aiding them in their resettlement processes on the outside. In a letter to Esther Briesemeister, John Provinse, head of the WRA Community Services Division, outlined a number of ways in which the YWCA could "assist in the relocation program" (1945, 1). The first was the "continued group work training at the center" by the YWCA, indicating that the various morale-building, social skills–

12. From this point forward, the focus of the Welfare Section became relocation planning. Constance Kimmerling, head of the department at Minidoka, writes that relocation "became the end and aim of all activities within and without this one section. Social services were rendered, not only for the benefit of the family, but with a weather-eye cocked as to how they might contribute to the general plan of helping families return to a more normal way of living in a more normal community of their own choosing" (Kimmerling 1945, 1).

13. Protestant churches were active supporters of the Nikkei in the war years. See Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians 1982, 112–13.

accruing group work activities the camp chapters engaged in through their club programs and "exchange of association" with outside groups were indeed assessed by the WRA to be helpful to the resettlement scheme. Provinse also suggested that the JAEP field-workers explicitly encourage relocation by "pointing out" to the Nikkei that "acceptance is good and opportunities are many for the evacuees who leave the centers" (Provinse 1945, 2). On the outside, the WRA needed the YWCA's aid in "building constructive community attitudes regarding the Japanese" (Flack 1943, 1), which the YWCA had already been specifically preparing for with its exchange of association program and the National Board's continuous public relations efforts.

The WRA also requested the YWCA's aid in "getting the cooperation of community people in helping Japanese to work out their own problems and helping them become a part of the total community into which they move" (Flack 1943, 1). Along with the Federal Council of Churches, the YWCA played a leadership role on the ground in resettlement locations. It provided services and resources directly to the resettling Nikkei:

> As early as last spring the Chicago and Denver Associations began to receive incoming evacuees. They provided emergency housing, found employment in homes, organized recreation in various ways to help the newcomers and their new city to become mutually acquainted. In the service they were associated with other agencies and churches. Fifteen additional associations are now preparing for similar participation in the resettlement program, others are employing evacuees as stenographers and in various capacities and still others are standing ready to receive referrals of incoming women and girls, to give them the kind of assistance offered to all other women and girls and to include them in regular activities. (Watson 1943*a*, 199)

The YWCA also "pioneered" (Watson 1943*a*, 199) the task of organizing national and local social welfare coalitions, providing administrative, financial, and material support "in early cooperative preparation in several Middle Western communities for reception of evacuees" (Watson 1943*a*, 199). Since the WRA considered its responsibilities to the Nikkei to end "when jobs are found" (Flack 1943, 1), there was also a longer-term need for the YWCA to pay attention to the "adjustment problems of individuals as they move into new situations" and ensure that "ways be provided

whereby the evacuees can find their normal place in their new communities" (Flack 1943, 1).

While the psychoemotional adjustment issues emerging from the experience of forced removal and mass incarceration were grave concerns, the acute housing shortages and employment challenges in the resettlement areas were more immediate problems.[14] The YWCA, along with church groups, established temporary "hostels" as emergency measures. But these overcrowded rooming houses, which afforded little privacy and no cooking facilities, were costly options for the Nikkei, impoverished by massive financial losses in the forced removal process as well as years of subsistence employment in the camps (US War Relocation Authority 1943*b*). The YWCA also saw them as an undesirable extension of camp life, "segregated and with more limited facilities than the centers provided" (YWCA Race Relations Sub-Committee of the Public Affairs Committee 1945, 2). It lamented that the "Relocation Centers' institutionalized life is not the best but the actual living condition to which the evacuees are forced to return now are much worse" (YWCA National Board–Race Relations Subcommittee of the National Public Affairs Committee 1945*b*, 2).

To address the persistent housing problem and to counter the problems even the skilled Nikkei had in finding employment outside the bottom of the labor pool (Hodges 1942; Nishi, n.d., 4), the National Board urged local chapters in resettlement areas to hire and house Nikkei women. Many Associations were, however, conflicted on "the whole question as to whether the YWCA should actively participate in the resettlement program to the extent of opening up housing in the local residence and employing Japanese-American girls as stenographers or in food service departments" (Briesemeister 1946, 43). Caucasian Associations generally did not share their facilities with minority groups, and many such branches had never employed minority staff except perhaps as domestics. In one Association, "the question as to whether the YWCA residence would accept Japanese-American girls was discussed over a period of three months and a positive decision was finally reached with quite a strong minority viewpoint being presented" (Briesemeister 1946, 43). One Association, in

14. Wartime housing shortages were a problem in many cities where war industry attracted floods of newcomers. Competition for housing, fierce to begin with, was particularly difficult for the Nikkei, who contended also with discriminatory landlords.

which "there began to be feeling that the saturation point" (Briesemeister 1944b, 2) on the number of Nikkei staff had been reached, wondered if there should be a limit to the number of Nikkei employed by the chapter at any one time. Should the Nikkei be allowed to use the pool facilities? If so, should they do so "at the time white people swam"? (Briesemeister 1944b, 2). Such questions were "not so different from those that arise around Negro-white relationships" (Briesemeister 1944b, 2). While there was "decidedly not as much feeling about the Japanese-Americans as there is about the Negroes" (Briesemeister 1944b, 2), these were, nevertheless, difficult and divisive issues for the Associations. Some local Associations took it for granted "that to actively aid the resettlement program is the responsibility of a YWCA" (Watson 1942b, 1). Others did not: "If the Y.W.C.A. leadership in Akron properly reflects the attitudes of the city, resettlement there would be difficult" (1).

WANING SUPPORT FOR RESETTLEMENT

It is important to note that resettlement, an endeavor actively supported and aided by the YWCA, was a project met with noncompliance, and often overt hostility, by the Nikkei in the camps. At Tule Lake, it was reported that "resettlement is a fighting word" (US War Relocation Authority 1943d, 1); at Minidoka, "the best evacuee attitude" toward resettlement was "antagonistic cooperation" (Matsumoto 1945, 3). The Nikkei in the camps were well aware that, in addition to the widely acknowledged difficulties in housing and employment, there was "considerable negative propaganda" (Lyle 1943, 5) against them generated by yellow peril genre films and grim news reports from the Pacific theater of war. Many waited for the West Coast to reopen and were reluctant to begin new lives in unknown settings where reception was, at best, uncertain. Many of the Nikkei had also suffered great financial loss during the removal and had exhausted any savings in supplementing the subsistence wages paid for work in the camps, where minimal food and basic shelter were provided but all else needed to be purchased. The most willing resettlers were, unsurprisingly, the "young adults between 18–25—representing the venturesome leadership type" (YWCA National Board, Race Relations Subcommittee of the National Public Affairs Committee 1944, 1), who tended to be better educated and more employable than their older counterparts. By May of 1945, the bulk of that segment of the camp population was resettled in "44 states and the District of Columbia"

(Lane 1946, 127). What remained in the camps—both less willing and less able to leave—were the poor and vulnerable segments of the populations: the elderly, the non-English-speakers, single mothers, and others with questionable likelihood of finding sufficient employment, housing, and support outside (US War Relocation Authority 1943*b*, 1943*d*), as well as the so-called "'die hards' who did not want to leave the centers until the war was over" (Lane 1946, 127).

The WRA demonstrated an in-depth and often sympathetic knowledge of the losses suffered by the Nikkei as well as the difficulties they would encounter upon leaving. But such knowledge was profoundly at odds with its primary mandate for clearing out the camps. Its rhetoric tended, therefore, to elide its sympathies and veer toward interpretations that portrayed the reluctance as moral and psychological failure. While it acknowledged that much of the resistance could be attributed to "the shock of evacuation," it also concluded that the experience of being "wards of the government" had "halted the assimilation process and stunted initiative" (US War Relocation Authority 1943*b*, 3). The camps were difficult to leave not only because they offered "a security which evacuees fear they will not find in resettlement" (US War Relocation Authority 1943*c*, 3) but also because the Nikkei were reluctant to leave behind "the keen enjoyment experienced through participation in group cultural and recreational activities at the center" (US War Relocation Authority 1943*d*, 5).

The WRA was not alone in this conclusion. Social work organizations, including the YWCA, had from the start feared the possibility of "the multitude of social problems which arise from periods of enforced idleness" (Anonymous 1942–43, 8). The YWCA's main motivation for establishing the JAEP, it must be remembered, was concern that the incarceration and mass living would have negative psychological effects on the Nikkei. As the war progressed, the fears had concretized into conviction that the internment had indeed instilled in the Nikkei the "new habits of idleness" (Hoey 1942). Bertha Choda of the Bureau of Public Assistance, a former assistant counselor in the Heart Mountain Welfare Section, described it thus: "Surrounding the center was a fence that closed out freedom, it is true, but also the worry, pain, and struggle for survival experienced by the Japanese in the hostile competitive society 'outside.' Institutional psychology had developed out of this 'security' derived from center living, and was probably the most significant reason for the resistant attitude toward leaving. Here was a mass regression to dependency rationalized as hostility to

the government, and expressed in a 'sit-down' response toward the efforts of the government representatives—the WRA personnel in the relocation program" (Choda 1946, 142). At least one member of the JAEP's field-team explicitly agreed with the general view that a culture of dependency had indeed developed. Marian Brown Reith reported in 1943 that of the many factors that "militate against" resettlement was an "adjustment to a state of dependency" (Reith 1943*b*, 2).

In his damning first-hand account of the closing of Minidoka, the American Baptist Home Mission Society's Jobu Yasumura (1945) detailed what "can only be described as Gestapo methods" (1) used by the WRA to move the population out and close the camps:

> Severe pressures were being used. There was not only one but many removals and evictions. Repercussions have been quickly evident. Resentments, bitterness and further resistance to relocation were manifest. This, to the Minidoka administrators, calls for further stringent methods and pressures. Part of the pressure was the decision to shut off and lock up sanitary facilities (one building to each block housing, laundry, bath and toilet facilities) in what was termed "orderly" fashion. It was orderly, certainly, in terms of pressure—the first block to suffer closing of facilities were those that had the greatest numbers of residents and the more articulate and, therefore, to the administration, the "agitators." (1)

Such measures "emphasizing the finality of center closure" (US War Relocation Authority 1946, 3) were enacted in the camps per the specification that "services or operations that interfere with the relocation of the residents, or that postpone such relocation, shall be curtailed or eliminated as soon as possible. Services or operations that advance such relocation may be continued as long as they are necessary" (US War Relocation Authority 1946, 3). Schools in all camps (except Tule Lake, where Nikkei awaiting deportation to Japan were held) were permanently closed at end of the 1945 Spring semester, and this was, in so far as advancing resettlement, "without doubt one of the most significant and successful moves made by WRA in a long time" (Nishi, n.d., 8).

By this late stage in the resettlement process, the YWCA's initial unquestioning support of the resettlement program had waned. The Race Relations Subcommittee (1945c) concluded that the YWCA "should no lon-

ger urge people out until the government or some outside people guarantee some sort of housing. Many of them are better off there, than moving out and moving to slum areas" (1). In its view, the "bottleneck between the Washington office of WRA and local offices" (YWCA National Board, Race Relations Subcommitee of the National Public Affairs Committee 1945*b*, 1) placed an unmanageable burden on local social service organizations. The YWCA believed that the WRA should create, instead, a temporary agency to "coordinate the related work of social security, housing, employment" (1), work that the WRA's resettlement offices was responsible for doing but was doing inadequately: "The WRA program is good on paper. Reports sound wonderful. But the program has broken down; the people are not relocating; they're being dislocated" (1). The Board voted in October of 1945 to request that the WRA "revise its schedule for closing the centers taking into consideration the aged and unemployable and others for whom it would be very difficult to resettle" (YWCA Race Relations Sub-Committee of the Public Affairs Committee 1945, 2). The requests probably would have made no difference even if they had been made earlier. That they were eleventh-hour appeals ensured that they did not; Jerome, the first camp to close, had done so already on June 30, 1944. Eight others shut down between October and November of 1945. The push for resettlement, which "overshadowed and permeated every other activity in every division and section" of the camps (Kimmerling, Fite, and Abbott 1945, 50), went on unabated. Evictions of the "bitter-enders" and "recalcitrants" (Huso 1945, 142) marked the end of the WRA tenure in the camps. Tule Lake, the last, closed its doors on March 20, 1946.

ASSIMILATION

The resettlement project was designed explicitly to prevent regional concentration and the reformulation of ethnic enclaves. The persistent and not altogether unjustified fear of generating "undue community antagonism to the resettlement plan or to individuals of Japanese ancestry coming into the community" (National Social Case Work Council 1943, 3) underscored the pragmatic benefits of a thinly scattered population, which would be less noticeable and more likely to be quietly absorbed before anyone could object to its presence. The JAEP's Betty Lyle reported in the fall of 1943 that "although resettlement is progressing well, adverse community

sentiment is still a great handicap" (5). Conspicuous reminders of the Nikkei's presence in the new communities—such as "Talking in a language other than English" (US War Relocation Authority, n.d., 5) and "Living in 'colonies' or traveling in large groups of persons of Japanese ancestry" (US War Relocation Authority, n.d., 6)—were, therefore, to be prevented. All involved, likewise, needed to "work quietly" and avoid "an over-sympathetic approach or one that over-emphasizes civil liberties aspect of the situation" (Ellis 1942*b*, 1), which would assuredly reinvigorate the accusations of Nikkei "coddling" levied against the WRA (Tozier 1945).

Resettlement was, more importantly, predicated on the ideal of assimilation. "If they could be widely scattered, they would become integrated with the American majority more rapidly and fully" (US Civil Service Commission 1943, 218). The "decentralization of the Japanese-American group" (Minneapolis Relocation Committee 1943, 1) was, moreover, argued by all concerned as a significant benefit to the Nikkei. John Powell, the chief of the WRA Community Management Division, which oversaw the social welfare departments in the camps, explained at the 1943 National Conference of Social Work (Powell 1943, 302) that a successful resettlement that sufficiently scattered the community would be "a channel of permanent advantage to the Japanese Americans themselves," transforming into "a triumphant example of successful assimilation what has been a 'problem' group." The Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans (1946), a multi-agency coalition led by the American Baptist Home Mission Society and the YWCA and which included the American Red Cross, Community Chest and Councils, the National Social Welfare Assembly, the Council of Social Agencies, and the Bureau of Public Assistance, concurred: "Japanese-Americans are now scattered all over the United States. This dispersal is a bi-product of evacuation and the relocation program carried on by the untiring efforts of the War Relocation Authority. It is one of the good things that resulted from evacuation" (2). In an interview conducted in 1974, former WRA Assistant Director Robert Cozzens called the resettlement program "the greatest thing that ever happened to the Japanese people in America."

> They were happy. They were all located in three states before that, in concentrated areas, living in—oh, I wouldn't say squalor, but very poorly. Very, very poorly. Living in shacks and things of that kind. After the war, when

> they came back, even the poorer or medium-class Japanese, came back to live like part of the general population. They lived as Japanese before. They came back living a life similar to the American people. And the kids liked hamburgers, instead of sukiyaki and a lot of other things. Because they'd lived all over the United States. (Levenson and Cozzens 1974, 50)

Nothing in the examined archived materials indicates that the YWCA viewed the outcomes of the resettlement in such triumphalist terms. Interpreting the internment as a facet of the nation's racial prejudice, the YWCA also did not share the view that "concentration on the West Coast was a factor back of the decision to evacuate them" (US Civil Service Commission 1943, 218), the commonly held idea that the Nikkei's unfortunate tendency to segregate themselves had incited their incarceration.[15] The YWCA clearly did, however, share WRA's views on resettlement as an ultimate goal for the Nikkei, and it saw integration—a term it used interchangeably with assimilation—as a necessary part of successful resettlement. "Our goal is integration of persons of Japanese ancestry," declared the Race Relations Subcommittee (YWCA National Board, Race Relations Subcommittee of the National Public Affairs Committee 1945*d*, 1). The YWCA, however, saw its approach to assimilation as being qualitatively different, both more nuanced in understanding and pragmatic in application, than the standard. It criticized the view of "some community people" who believed "it is wrong for the Japanese Americans to gather in groups and advocate that upon arrival into the new community they seek their association with Caucasians and others" (Briesemeister 1946, 44). Annie Clo Watson (1943b) dismissed the reductive approach that other organizations had taken in recommending that "not more than three Nisei should ever be seen on the street together" or "six should be the limit of attendance at 'all-Japanese' gatherings" as unrealistic. She explained that the YWCA's position was that "assimilation is a psychological and sociological process that does not take place overnight or according to nice rules" (3). While

15. The problematization of immigrant enclaves as unwholesome settings for its residents and a source of danger to the public at large is a phenomenon of long-standing in both social work and the public sphere. The idea that such enclaves are created by immigrants unable and unwilling to assimilate to the American ways and values is an entrenched part of this discourse. See Park and Kemp (2006).

"the avoidance of segregation in the assimilation of the Japanese is the objective most earnestly to be sought after" (3), the YWCA's usual pragmatic position was that assimilation was not a process that could be hurried or imposed at will.

But these nuanced views of assimilation held by the Board and JAEP staff did not always materialize in practice. The YWCA's comparatively progressive assessment of the Nisei was that "they already belong here by birth and education, by culture and custom. It is ours to absorb them" (Wygel 1943, 10). But absorption by the Caucasian mainstream was not necessarily the goal of the Nisei. Arline Brauer, a "YWCA groupworker" (Yatsushiro 1946, 1) in Denver, "was quite puzzled at the fact that the Nisei, especially girls, just won't mix with Caucasian groups no matter how hard she tries to integrate the Nisei into the latter groups. Instead, she stated, the Nisei prefer to be among themselves and stage activities among themselves" (Yatsushiro 1946, 4). The YWCA operated from the position that "in helping Japanese-American citizens and their families to take their places again in normal community life it is rendering significant service to this nation in the struggle to preserve the values long cherished as the American way of life" (Roe 1944, 2). But as one Issei noted, when the Nikkei hear the phrase "'return to normal life,' the people think they are being urged to start living among strangers who were Caucasians, which is a life definitely NOT NORMAL" (Matsumoto 1945, 1), especially for the Issei.

When the West Coast exclusion was finally rescinded and the Nikkei began to return to their former communities from the camps and the various resettlement locations, the cracks in the YWCA's integration schema began to show more clearly. T. S. Sasaki (1946*b*), on tour through California for the WRA's Resettlement Study, reported on a controversy in the Boyle Heights area of Los Angeles. A Mrs. S., a middle-aged Nikkei woman who professed to have "lost faith in the white race," explained: "The YWCA building in Boyle Heights was set aside to house all races while we, the Japanese, who own the building have no say in the matter. We had an agreement with the YW when we left that we intended to take it back when we came back. But instead, the YW went ahead on their program of integration and without consulting us" (1). Her claim that "you can multiply the same situation any number of times" was corroborated by Mr. I., a board member of the Union Church, located in the heart of Little Tokyo: "The integration program is a good thing, but it will take years before

it can be totally successful. The Japanese are not ready for it. . . . The Church Board wants an 'integration' program while the Japanese are still suffering from the effects of being segregated in camps. Many of us still want things Japanese, whether it is people, food, picture shows, etc. We cannot offer them that, and the people do not come" (2).[16]

CONCLUSION

The JAEP undoubtedly provided invaluable services to the Nikkei. "From my brief visit in Manzanar it is very clear that the YWCA fills a unique place in the life of the community," commented Ruth Woodsmall, a visitor from the World YWCA, the umbrella organization of the international network of YWCAs headquartered in Washington, DC (Woodsmall 1942, 4): "The eager responsiveness to all of these different gatherings planned by the YWCA was an evidence of the loneliness of the life of Manzanar in the reaching out for contacts with the outside world" (4). In a letter to Annie Clo Watson in July 1943, Harry Mayeda, a Nisei supervisor of Community Activities at Tule Lake conveyed a similar message:

> I like to say very frankly that many of the Nisei in the relocation centers are disillusioned and disheartened over the Supreme Court's decision upholding the evacuation orders. Then too, with the unjustifiable persecution of the Nisei by the American Legion, Native Sons of the Golden West, Associated Farmers of California, Hearst Press, and the Dies Committee is not adding to faith on the part of the Nisei in this country. However, persons like yourself, Mrs. Marian Brown-Reith, Bruce McGuire, Essie McGuire, Catherine MacArthur, and many others too numerous to add have certainly been of enormous help in assisting the naysayers retain their faith in America. I, for one, am deeply grateful to such a splendid organization as the YWCA for their contribution to more sympathetic understanding of the Nisei by Americans. (Mayeda 1943, 2)

The WRA Director Dillon Myer's February 1946 letter of commendation to the YWCA, highlighting Briesemeister's "outstanding" work in the

16. See Brant T. Lee's (2001) interesting discussion of the selling of the building that housed the San Francisco Japanese YWCA, "A Racial Trust: The Japanese YWCA and the Alien Land Law." He raises an interesting question of who actually owned the buildings, given the Alien Land Law which prohibited the Issei from owing land in California and many other states.

camps, described the field-workers' visits to the camps as having "maintained an outside contact for many evacuees that could not be supplied in any other way" (1). The letter also paid particular "tribute to the YWCA for its courageous and progressive position in many communities where it has assumed a leadership of an interracial program on a thoroughly democratic basis, and for its consistently fair treatment of all minority groups" (1).

The YWCA's wartime work with the Nikkei, in the context of its times and in comparison to other social work organizations, was progressive in its vision of racial equality and courageous in its proactive, vocal consistency; the YWCA was unique among social work organizations in seeing the internment—the wholesale alienation and criminalization of a population qua race—in terms of the "immense" ethical, moral, and political implications it had for the national democracy. Perhaps most important, the YWCA was there in the fray, with vocal protests against the "evacuation" at the beginning, as a steadfast and savvy presence in the camps, and as tireless advocates and facilitators in the end as the camps closed but the struggles of the Nikkei community continued out into the communities of resettlement east, and return west. If indeed 80 percent of success is showing up, the YWCA can be judged not only to have succeeded but to have been the only social work organization to have earned even that incomplete portion of success.

In a 1942 article in the *Compass*, Frank Bruno, the American Association of Social Workers (AASW) President, pondered: "What is the place of a professional association in a complex and complicated project such as this war and its aftermath?" (19). The answer, at least for the AASW, did not include attention to the plight of the Nikkei. The wholesale uprooting and incarceration of the population garnered scant and inconsistent attention from the social work profession as a whole. Several social welfare organizations became part of the Committee on Resettlement of Japanese Americans, originally formed by the American Baptist Home Mission. But the Committe was constructed specifically to deal with the issues of resettlement, that is, with issues that brought the plight of the Nikkei into the backyards of those social welfare organizations. Philip Schafer (1943), a social worker who worked as supervisor under the aegis of the Public Assistance Board during the removal phase and an officer for the Chicago resettlement office under the WRA, commented that overall, "social workers throughout the country, outside of the relocation centers, have not been adequately aware of these new people coming into their com-

munities, nor have they interested themselves in the problems which this group presents" (19).

The archived history of the YWCA's work with the Nikkei does not present a portrait of a perfectly enlightened organization. From the long perspective of history, the YWCA's conviction of the necessity for integration, however well intended and respectfully framed, does not look fundamentally different from blatant Americanization schemes of eras past. In an article published in May of 1942 at the start of the JAEP's foray into the camps, Mabel Ellis and Helen Wilkins of the YWCA pondered that, on the problem of racism, "perhaps the most difficult problem to face is our own attitude" (9). The progressivism of the YWCA did not preclude, despite such acknowledgement, the fundamentally racist belief that being Japanese and being American are mutually exclusive states. Winfred Wygel's praise of the girls of the Manzanar YWCA, "so many of them are lovely, even beautiful . . . so many look more American than Japanese," hints at an underlying belief that, in order for the Nikkei to be absorbed into the American fold and become assets to "a country which is trying the greatest experiment in mixed population in history" (Wygel 1943, 10), they needed to be, and to act, less Japanese. The same racist logic had guided the Army's policy for exempting from incarceration certain mixed-race individuals who, having lived exclusively among Caucasians, "had not developed Oriental thought patterns or been subjected to so-called Japanese culture" (US Army 1943, 145).

The JAEP's group work programs for leadership, recreation, and socialization, however welcome they were to the incarcerated Nikkei, were geared, ultimately, to serve the purposes of assimilationist resettlement. According to the WRA's Community Activities Department, a part of the Community Management Division under whose aegis the YWCA operated within the camps, every effort had been made in the camps toward the "de-emphasis of Japanese type activities" (US War Relocation Authority 1943*a*, 2) and "to emphasize American-type activities in the program" (War Relocation Authority 1943*a*, 1). The Department's "shift of emphasis from planned recreational activities to group work programs," under which the YWCA developed and flourished in the camps, undergirded this campaign for "keeping alive and healthy" American activities such as "social dancing" (Marks 1943, 2) that the YWCA organized, and to root out unhealthy activities such as "Japanese drama," "shogi or go clubs," and the "spread of Japanese language teaching among little children" (Man-

zanar Relocation Center 1944, 3). However unwittingly, the YWCA served as a crucial facilitator of the policies of the WRA to strip away the influence of "Japanese culture" and instill an American sensibility.

Esther Briesemeister's final account of the work of the JAEP concludes with the following passage:

> All parts of all Associations were not necessarily in accord with the emphasis given the work with evacuees, but nevertheless intrepid souls went on with services in behalf of the Japanese. Historically the YWCA has been known as a pioneering group of women in many fields oftentimes controversial and explosive. That there are critics of some actions is a healthy sign if we are to represent all phases of a community. We should be too cloistered and too insulated were we not faced with dissension within our own ranks. True, at times, we bog down in certain endeavors because we are not able to speak for all. However the efforts made in behalf of a people forced to leave house and property under a cloud because of wartime rulings have been stirring. Not only at the heartbreaking time of evacuation but the ensuing months of confinement within centers where time lay heavy and thoughts ran riot—these were the times when an energetic and effective organization of women made itself felt. It has been a time of education for Associations heretofore completely oblivious of a small section of the national population. It has meant the facing of opposition and obstacles on the part of many. It has brought us to face with concrete examples of things we have said and written beautifully. It has made us wonder if we can ever blithely just write words again. (Briesemeister 1946, 53)

The purpose of a disciplinary history is not to judge past deeds. Its task is, instead, to analyze the past to inform the present in its efforts to assess current trends and forge future paths. The history of the YWCA's wartime work with the Nikkei makes clear that even with courage and the best intentions, the deeds of conscientious and skilled individuals are not necessarily free of the pitfalls of bias and partiality. The hope of this analysis is to bring this lesson to the fore and thereby to incite current social workers to examine instances of their own complacency and to reconsider their own ideas and actions. Has the profession's views and practices around the problematic of race and racism, theories of culture and community, shifted sufficiently from the days of the internment? What thorny events and problematic tangles does the contemporary profession—as was the

AASW of the wartime period—remain oblivious to today? Which complex challenges has it—like the YWCA—found solutions for without sufficient soul-searching and radical restructuring?

Contemporary social work builds its programs and practices for today's "alien" populations upon the conceptual bedrock of "acculturation" rather than assimilation or integration. But like assimilation and integration, acculturation's foundational basis is the notion of culture, a racialized and profoundly marginalizing frame applied almost exclusively as a particular marker for minorities and people of color (Park 2005). The current ideal of acculturation does not look fundamentally different from that of the assimilation that undergirded the YWCA's vision of integration. Current theories of culture and acculturation, like assimilation and integration, do not entertain the kinds of inclusion that allow for the radical reshaping of the community by those who are so acculturated. Acculturation remains a unidirectional path; it does not contest the primacy of the "Caucasian community," and perhaps more specifically, it does not dislodge middle-class Caucasian norms. The ultimate goal of a disciplinary history is to provoke the real-time examination of assumptions, theories, and practices to obviate the need for post hoc analysis of current missteps and lapses. Are we "too cloistered and too insulated" and without the necessary "dissension within our own ranks" to examine current ideas and endeavors intrepidly?

NOTE

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Advancing Poverty Measurement and Policy: Evidence from Wisconsin during the Great Recession

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ABSTRACT This article estimates trends in the poverty rates in Wisconsin for the overall population, for children, and for the elderly between 2008 and 2010, using an alternative poverty measure. Our measure is similar to the federally implemented Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) but customized to reflect the place-specific needs and resources of Wisconsin. Unlike the official poverty measure, the Wisconsin Poverty Measure (WPM) considers tax credits and noncash benefits and adjusts for work-related and medical care expenses and relative living costs statewide and across substate regions. Using the American Community Survey and Wisconsin administrative data, the WPM shows essentially no change in state poverty rates between 2008 and 2009 and a decline between 2009 and 2010, although state poverty levels calculated via the official measure continued to increase between 2008 and 2010. We discuss the policy implications of results and how the WPM compares to the SPM and other local poverty measures.

Researchers and policy makers have criticized the US Census Bureau's official poverty measure for not accurately accounting for the contemporary needs and resources of American families, and this criticism intensified in the wake of the recent Great Recession (Citro and Michael 1995; Hutto et al. 2011). Critics assert that the official measure uses an outdated poverty threshold based on a pattern of consumption that was typical in the 1960s and that it does not account for resources provided by unmarried partners, omits health-care and work-related expenses, and fails to ad-

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just for geographic differences in prices. Further, the only resource the official poverty measure considers is pretax cash income; it does not consider government-provided noncash benefits such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp Program) benefits or tax credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the refundable child tax credit (CTC), which increased nationally and locally as the government sought to address economic hardship following the recession. The limitations of the official poverty measure are more troubling than ever before, because the majority of the expansion in public benefits during the recent recession was in the form of noncash programs and tax-related benefits rather than cash transfers (Sherman 2011).

To provide a more accurate understanding of which people and families are poor, and the influence of public policies on poverty, a variety of scholarly efforts seek to develop and implement improved measures of poverty. While in 1995 a National Academy of Sciences (NAS) panel offered an alternative method for measuring poverty that addresses many of the criticisms of the official poverty measure (Citro and Michael 1995), it was not until recently that the federal government implemented the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM; Short and Renwick 2010; Short 2011). During the intervening years, as numerous attempts to develop a national measure were bogged down in technical and political complexities (Short 2003; Dalaker 2005; Iceland 2005), some states and localities took matters into their own hands. In 2008, the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) released their first measure of poverty, based on the NAS methods (CEO 2008), and in 2010 scholars at the Institute for Research on Poverty released a study of poverty in Wisconsin in 2008 (Isaacs et al. 2010*a*).

In the past several years, areas across the nation have developed initiatives and commissions aimed at informing and creating policy to fight poverty, bespeaking the need for an improved poverty measure that can be employed in state and local areas. In order to gauge progress in reducing poverty, many states are seeking to develop a tool that can project or evaluate the antipoverty effect of policies more accurately than the official poverty measure. Despite the need for such a measure, the technical difficulties involved, such as the lack of data and techniques needed to identify accurate information about comprehensive needs and resources, make the analysis expensive and impede research on this topic. Although studies in select local regions (e.g., Zedlewski et al. 2010; Marks et al. 2011;

CEO 2012) are emerging, there is much less analysis of poverty trends within states, and the role that policies play in determining them, than there is analysis of poverty in the nation as a whole. This article adds to the literature by using the Wisconsin Poverty Measure (WPM) to examine trends in the state's poverty rates during the 2008–10 period of the Great Recession and to consider the effect of tax and benefit policies on poverty in Wisconsin during this time period. The Wisconsin Poverty Measure, which the current study helps to develop and employs for analysis, accounts for the needs and resources of Wisconsin families more accurately than the official poverty measure. Further, a key strength of the WPM (compared to the official poverty measure) is that it can be used to assess the effects of public policy on poverty and thereby inform better policy prescriptions. The WPM reflects not only pretax cash income (as does the official poverty measure) but also taxes paid, refundable tax credits, and noncash benefits. In addition, the measure incorporates reductions in available resources due to expenses for basic needs, including medical care, child care, and transportation to work. It also adjusts for the state's relative living expenses, both overall and across substate regions, and expands the family unit to include the resources and needs of unmarried partners. To obtain reliable estimates, our analysis employs data from the American Community Survey (ACS), which has much larger sample sizes for state and local estimates than the Current Population Survey (CPS) used by research implemented at the national level. Because the ACS data have some limitations, including incomplete information about public assistance program participation, we supplement them with state administrative data.

In addition to contributing to broader efforts to employ NAS-based alternative poverty measures, including the implementation of the SPM, our study adds to the field in other ways. First, we apply these measures to a local area (Wisconsin) in ways that reflect the characteristics of the state and exemplify the utility of a NAS-based measure as a place-specific alternative poverty measure. Based on our findings, we discuss the WPM's policy implications, including its potential use in estimating the effects that public programs have against poverty. Further, taking Milwaukee County as an example of a long-term high-poverty area with severe residential segregation, our analysis of subareas within Milwaukee County testifies to the benefits of using an NAS-based alternative poverty measure for examining the geographical distribution of poverty across substate areas.

Next, while we follow Nathan Hutto and colleagues (2011) with regard to providing alternative poverty estimates by age groups, we expand these efforts (which were focused on poverty in 2007) by examining poverty trends between 2008 and 2010 to explore the more nuanced implications of an NAS-based alternative poverty measure during the recession and its aftermath. A final important contribution of the study is a comparison of the current results with those from a similar research report focused on New York City (CEO 2012) and a discussion of the implications of the differences in results across these two studies (including distinguishing between methodological differences and substantive regional differences). Further, we enhance understanding of how and when the WPM and the census SPM lead to different estimates and discuss the potential advantages of the WPM as a local-specific measure compared to the state's SPM-like measure.

CHANGING NATURE OF THE SAFETY NET: WISCONSIN'S ECONOMY AND PROGRAM PARTICIPATION DURING THE RECESSION

The first important thing to understand is the way that policy toward income support for low-income populations has changed since the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act. Since 1995, cash benefits from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) have declined in real dollars. In contrast, there has been substantial growth in noncash benefits, especially SNAP and work-related tax credits, since the beginning of the Great Recession in 2008. Owing in part to the deterioration of economic conditions but also to the implementation of the 2008 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), as well as state and local changes in program administration and benefit delivery, the SNAP program and the combination of the EITC and the refundable CTC have increased. The total amount of benefits from these three programs was over $150 billion in 2010, compared with less than $100 billion in 2007.[1] Measures of poverty along the lines suggested by the 1995 NAS report, and as implemented in the WPM, reflect the effects of these (and other) programs in fighting poverty and thereby offer a more timely and complete

1. These data are from an Urban Institute database compiled as part of research done by Julia Isaacs and colleagues (2012).

picture of the way that the income support system affects poverty than does the official poverty measure.

As the Great Recession, the worst recession in the postwar era, hit the nation, economic hardship in the state of Wisconsin dramatically increased. Although national authorities cite June 2009 as the end of the Great Recession, the economic downturn continues to have negative repercussions in Wisconsin and beyond. For example, at the end of 2010, Wisconsin had about 152,000 fewer jobs than at the beginning of the recession in December 2007. At the end of 2011, there was no improvement in this 5.3 percent decline in the prerecession job base.

Following the onset of the recession, as unemployment and job losses increased and many of the unemployed remained out of work for 6 months or longer, SNAP caseloads rose dramatically in the nation, as well as in Wisconsin. The ARRA resulted in a SNAP benefit level increase of roughly 14 percent, which was effective from April 1, 2009. Following the formation of Wisconsin Governor Doyle's 2009 poverty task force, program administrators in Wisconsin began to accelerate efforts to increase SNAP enrollments. Applications were accepted online, liquid-asset tests when determining eligibility were suspended (in 28 other states as well as Wisconsin), and debit cards were issued within a required time frame. According to a 2012 Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau review, the improved accuracy and accountability of this expansion was such that the state greatly reduced error rates as benefits grew. The rate of increase for SNAP in Wisconsin was even larger than the national rate; for example, the number of people receiving SNAP benefits in Wisconsin nearly doubled between January 2007 and January 2010 (an increase of 95 percent), compared to a 61 percent increase in the nation as a whole during the same period.[2] The increase in SNAP caseloads was much larger outside Milwaukee than within Milwaukee and was particularly large in the time period covered by the 2010 ACS, from which the data for the most recent year in this study are taken.[3] The 2009 ARRA also increased federal income tax credits by expanding

2. Data on SNAP participation are from the FoodShare data website of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/em/rsdata/fs-caseload-recip-by-cy.htm).

3. Influenced by the ARRA benefit increase and a growing caseload during the recession, Wisconsin's SNAP fiscal year benefits continued to increase; total benefits were $595 million in 2009, $934 million in 2010, and $1,105 million in 2011 (Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau 2012).

the federal EITC (and the Wisconsin EITC, which is set at a certain percentage of the federal EITC) to provide higher benefits to families with three children than families with two children.[4] Further, the ARRA expanded the CTC and created a one-time "Making Work Pay" tax credit. According to the Tax Policy Center's calculations using data from the Internal Revenue Service Statistics of Income program, there was a 21 percent increase in the total amount of EITC credits in Wisconsin (from $643 million in 2008 to $780 million in 2009; Williams, Johnson, and Shure 2009).[5] According to our tax calculations, using ACS and state administrative data, the total amount of (both federal and state) tax refunds in Wisconsin increased by 39 percent, from $922 million to $1.28 billion between 2008 and 2009, and then remained at a similar level ($1.26 billion) in 2010. Because the tax changes under ARRA were implemented retroactively for the full 2009 calendar year and were in effect for all of 2010, they influenced the entire time period covered by the 2010 ACS data.

In summary, both tax credits and noncash benefit programs such as SNAP have become increasingly important programs for fighting poverty. Welfare reform and the government's response to the recent recession resulted in the absolute and relative growth of these benefits, supplanting the declining TANF cash transfer program.

ANALYTIC APPROACH

DATA

Our primary data source is the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey, which we supplement with state administrative data on participation in public assistance programs. To analyze the ACS data, we use data extracts from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), which are available to researchers outside the Census Bureau and consist of a subsample of all ACS data collected and used by the Census Bureau. We use data from the 2008, 2009, and 2010 IPUMS ACS files, and each annual data set drawn from the ACS subsamples contains a sample of nearly 60,000 individuals residing in Wisconsin (Ruggles et al. 2010).

The ACS data set is advantageous because of its relatively large sample sizes; we can use it to examine poverty in smaller areas within the

4. Wisconsin's EITC was set, e.g., at 4 percent, 14 percent, and 43 percent of the federal EITC for families with one, two, and three qualifying children, respectively, in 2009 and 2010.

5. Data are not yet available for 2010.

state (Ruggles et al. 2010). While the national poverty estimates use the Current Population Survey to calculate national poverty estimates under both the official measure and the SPM, the sample sizes for CPS's single-year data are too small to produce reliable state and local poverty estimates. Using the ACS IPUMS data, we examine poverty in 22 areas in Wisconsin, including 10 large (more densely populated) counties and 12 multicounty areas that encompass relatively small (less densely populated) counties.[6] For Milwaukee, we also provide poverty estimates for subcounty areas. The ACS data also enable us to include detailed housing information. While the ACS data set is subject to limitations, such as a lack of information about SNAP benefit amounts, energy assistance, and public housing, it is the best available data for examining poverty at the local level, and we attempt to address its limitations by combining it with data from other sources, including Wisconsin's administrative data on participation in income support programs.

It is worth noting that ACS data on income in each year span a total of 23 months. For example, the information about income drawn from the 2010 ACS data covers January 2009 through November 2010 because the survey was implemented throughout the 2010 calendar year and refers to income in the previous 12 months. Thus, results for a given year (e.g.,2010), actually reflect conditions over most of 2 years (2009 and 2010).

IMPLICATIONS OF FOCUSING ON WISCONSIN

While the WPM is largely consistent with alternative national poverty measures, this study concentrates on Wisconsin alone. One disadvantage of the Wisconsin focus is that generalization of our results may be limited because other subnational estimates may take slightly different approaches (e.g., see CEO 2012). Further, if public programs in Wisconsin operate at a different level of efficiency than those in other states, the effects of poverty programs that we report here may differ from those estimated under an alternative poverty measure implemented in other states.

Despite these potential limitations, our goal is to serve as a model for other states and localities seeking to develop their own place-specific al-

6. The 12 multicounty areas correspond to the Census Bureau's sampling units, called Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs); their boundaries are set by the Census Bureau to ensure at least 100,000 residents in each unit (Ruggles et al. 2010).

ternative measurements of poverty. Wisconsin is an excellent location for a case study of alternative poverty measures because of the state's historic importance as an experimental site for national policies and the provision of resources for this research by the federal government. The development of the WPM, especially in determining what resources or basic costs should be considered in determining poverty, was facilitated in large part by rich interactions between researchers at the University of Wisconsin, agency workers, and government officials in the community. These interactions were largely a result of the University of Wisconsin System's adherence to the "Wisconsin Idea," the principle that university research should improve people's lives beyond the classroom (Smeeding and Marks 2011). The Wisconsin Idea and revised poverty measures like the WPM could be implemented in national or other regional settings.

POVERTY MEASUREMENT UNDER THE WPM

As with almost all poverty measures, the WPM determines poverty status by comparing a measure of economic need to a measure of the economic resources available to meet that need. A poverty threshold (or measure of need) is the least amount of income deemed necessary to cover the basic expenses of the unit of people considered. Three major components commonly constitute poverty measures: the resource-sharing unit (and the universe of people included in those units), resources, and need. We describe each of these components to demonstrate our approach to the WPM.

The resource-sharing unit includes all persons who share the same residence and are also assumed to share income and consumption. In the WPM we expand the definition of family used in the official poverty measure (which is restricted to married couples and their families) by including unmarried partners and their families, foster children, and unrelated minor children in the resource-sharing unit. This consideration reflects important changes in society: many families now include nontraditional family relationships such as cohabitation.[7] Our approach to constructing resource-sharing units and our universe of analysis are largely consistent with those adopted by the SPM, but we depart from SPM approaches by excluding college students who are ages 18–23 years old with annual earn-

7. Between 1997 and 2001, 53 percent of births to unmarried mothers (18 percent of all births) were to cohabiting parents, while in the preceding decade, 41 percent of all nonmarital births, 11 percent of all births, were to cohabiting parents (Kennedy and Bumpass 2008).

ings of less than $5,000 from the universe of poverty. We implement this exclusion because these college students are likely to have support from their parents, and so their resources are much higher than their reported income; counting them as poor may upwardly bias our poverty estimates, particularly in cities with a large number of undergraduates living off campus. Excluding college students changes our estimate for Wisconsin's overall poverty by .1 percentage point but leads to greater differences in estimates for college towns such as Madison and La Crosse.

While the official poverty measure considers no resources beyond pretax cash income, the WPM incorporates a more comprehensive range of resources, including tax credits, noncash benefits (specifically SNAP), housing subsidies, and low-income home energy assistance.[8] Because the ACS does not include data on taxes paid or tax credits collected, we rely on a tax model developed by John Coder of Sentier Research LLC for this project (Isaacs et al. 2010*a*). Our tax model simulates federal and state income and payroll taxes and tax credits. For energy and housing assistance we develop simulation models, in which we first estimate eligibility using annual income data from the ACS, randomly draw participants from eligibility groups sorted by county or multicounty sampling area and demographic characteristics common to the ACS and state administrative data, and then impute average payment amounts. For SNAP benefits, we start with recipients identified in the ACS but then use similar simulation models to select for additional recipients among simulated SNAP eligibility units in each county or multicounty sampling area and simulate annual household benefits. The SNAP simulation model is aligned to administrative totals by county or multicounty sampling area, and for major household types within each area, to account for differences in benefit take-up rate across counties and household types.

In addition, in measuring resources, the WPM subtracts expenses spent to meet nondiscretionary spending needs, namely, medical out-of-pocket (MOOP) costs and work-related expenses that include child-care and transportation costs.[9] Consistent with our goal of measuring poverty

8. We do not include free or reduced-price school meals or WIC benefits; note that school meal benefits are not purchased by families and thus are not included in food, clothing, shelter, and utilities (FCSU) expenses, on which our poverty thresholds are based.

9. In contrast to the treatment of work-related expenses as a factor that reduces family resources, for the sake of technical ease, we consider MOOP expenses in determining the poverty threshold as a factor that increases the threshold. Note that some alternative poverty measures (including the SPM) consider medical expenses in determining resources;

in Wisconsin, we include Wisconsin-specific public resources, such as the Wisconsin Homestead Tax Credit and the Wisconsin EITC (in addition to the federal EITC), and resources that help reduce medical care expenses, such as BadgerCare.

To consider need, our poverty thresholds are constructed based on a 3-year average of food, clothing, shelter, and other expenses, which are set at roughly the thirty-third percentile of national consumption expenses for a two-child, two-adult family, with further adjustments for Wisconsin's lower cost of living (Citro and Michael 1995).[10] This approach differs from the official poverty measure, which is based on three times the cost of a minimally adequate diet in the 1960s, with adjustments for inflation but without consideration of the improved overall standard of living over time. The two measures also differ in that thresholds for living costs differ by regions within Wisconsin under the WPM but are the same across all states and regions under the official measure. In contrast, the SPM uses a 5-year average of the expenditures on FCSU that are set at roughly the thirty-third percentile of national consumption expenses for

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they often do so by imputing MOOP expenses and subtracting them from each family's resources. In contrast, we adjust for MOOP expenses by setting different poverty thresholds for families with varying levels of expected medical need. Despite this technical difference, the spirit of the consideration of MOOP expenses under the WPM is consistent with the consideration under the SPM. Our method for estimating child-care expenses in 2008 differs from our method for 2009 and 2010 estimates (see Isaacs et al. 2010*b*). For 2008 results, we assign estimated (positive) expenses to all working families with children, with the amounts varying by the age and number of children and the number of weeks worked. In contrast, for 2009 and 2010 results, we use the 2010 CPS, which is the first CPS to collect data on child-care cost amounts to impute actual child-care expenses for families. As a result of these imputations, many low-income families had zero in paid child-care expenses, rather than the modest positive amounts assigned under the earlier methodology. Largely because of this methodological difference, the estimates for 2008 are not strictly comparable to those for 2009 and 2010 presented here, though in an earlier report we show trends from 2008 to 2009 using consistent methodologies (Isaacs et al. 2010*a*, 2010*b*). We discuss the implications of this methodological issue for our key findings based on our additional sensitivity analyses.

10. We follow the NAS-based approach of using the thirty-third percentile of expenditures on FCSU for "families with two adults and two children" multiplied by 1.2 to add 20 percent for all other necessary expenses in constructing the poverty threshold, while Short (2011) uses an SPM-type method, and Hutto and colleagues (2011) and the CEO (2012) consider the percentage of the expenditures on FCSU for "families with two children" (including an amount for all other necessary expenses).

a family with two children. To estimate the poverty threshold specific to Wisconsin, we begin with the current experimental federal poverty threshold published by the Census Bureau (2012*b*). In 2010, the national threshold was $26,528. Our baseline poverty threshold (i.e., the threshold for a two-child, two-adult family) for Wisconsin in 2010 was $23,938, because the cost of living in Wisconsin is about 10 percent lower than for the nation as a whole (for further detail about the thresholds over time, see appendix table A1). For comparison, the official US poverty line for a two-child, two-adult family in 2010 was $22,113 (US Census Bureau 2012*a*).

In refining the measures of need, we calculated different poverty thresholds for families of different sizes through the use of equivalence scales. We also made adjustments to the poverty thresholds based on differences in housing costs across regions in Wisconsin (owners with a mortgage, owners without a mortgage, and renters; Garner and Betson 2010) and expected medical expenses (which vary across families based on health insurance status, presence of elders, and health status). For reference, table 1 provides descriptions of the characteristics of the WPM, the official poverty measure, and the SPM.

Finally, to determine whether or not a family and the individuals belonging to the family unit could be considered poor, we compared the comprehensive measure of resources to the relevant threshold or measure of need. Through the WPM, we hope to improve understanding of the needs and resources of Wisconsin residents, as well as how well the policies intended to reduce poverty by lowering expenses or increasing resources actually work.

ADDITIONAL POVERTY MEASURES EMPLOYED FOR COMPARISON

To provide a more complete picture of economic hardship in Wisconsin and the effect of tax benefit programs on poverty, our analysis employs two additional measures of poverty: a measure based on market (private) income only and the Census Bureau's official poverty measure, which adds cash benefits to the measure of pretax market income. Market income includes earnings, investment income, private retirement income, child support, and other forms of private income. The market-income-only measure employed in our analysis is consistent with the WPM with regard to the definitions of poverty thresholds and poverty units and in the treatment

TABLE 1. Comparison of Official, Supplemental, and Wisconsin Poverty Measures

Component	Official Poverty Measure	Supplemental Poverty Measure	Wisconsin Poverty Measure
Data source	CPS	CPS	ACS
Poverty unit or family unit	Individual or family unit restricted to married couples and their children	Expanded family unit including unmarried partners, their children, and any unrelated children (including foster children)	Expanded family unit including unmarried partners, their children, and any unrelated children (including foster children)
Poverty universe	Universe excludes unrelated children under 15 years old (including foster children) and people in institutional group quarters, college dormitories, and military barracks	Universe includes unrelated children under 15 years old (including foster children); it excludes people in institutional group quarters, college dormitories, and military barracks	Universe includes unrelated children under 15 years old (including foster children); it excludes people in group quarters (institutional and noninstitutional), college dormitories, and military barracks. The final model of the WPM used in this report also excludes students who are 18–23 years old, not living with family members, earned less than $5,000 in the past year, worked 0–13 weeks per year, and typically worked 0–20 hours per week
Resources:			
Pretax cash income	Wages, salaries, self-employment income, interest, dividends, rent, trusts, Social Security and railroad retirement pensions, disability benefits, unemployment compensation, child support received, veterans benefits, educational assistance, Supplemental Security Income, TANF cash benefits, and other cash public assistance	As defined in official measure	Similar in concept to official measure but including less detail about different sources of income because the relevant information obtainable from the ACS is more limited than that obtainable from the CPS
Near-cash income	Does not include near-cash income as resources	Plus near-cash resources to meet food, clothing, shelter, and utility needs (as data permit): • Housing subsidies • SNAP • School meals • WIC • Energy assistance benefits (LIHEAP)	Plus near-cash resources to meet food, clothing, shelter, and utility needs: • SNAP (called FoodShare in Wisconsin) • Housing subsidies • Energy assistance benefits (LIHEAP)
Tax provisions	Does not consider tax provisions as resources or expenses	Plus or minus tax provisions (the combination of taxes paid including income and payroll taxes	Plus tax provisions (the combination of taxes paid including income and payroll taxes paid

		paid, as well as tax credits and refunds); tax credits considered include the EITC	as well as tax credits and refunds) relevant to Wisconsin residents; tax credits considered include the federal and state EITCs and Wisconsin Homestead Credit
Expenses	Does not subtract expenses to meet nondiscretionary needs such as medical out-of-pocket costs, work-related costs, child support paid	Minus medical out-of-pocket expenses, work expenses (transportation and child care), child support paid	Minus work expenses (transportation and child care)*
Thresholds	Base threshold is calculated for two-parent, two-child families, based on food costs and the share of income spent on food in the early 1960s	Base threshold is calculated for all families with two children, and three parameters of adults, based on a 5-year average of expenses at the thirty-third percentile FCSU; multiplied by 1.2 for "a little bit more"	Base threshold is calculated for two-parent, two-child families, based on a 3-year average of expenses at the thirty-third percentile for FCSU; multiplied by 1.2 for "a little bit more"
Thresholds adjusted for	• Differences in family size and number of children and adults • Age, with separate thresholds for individuals and couples ages 65 and older	• Differences in family size and number of children and adults using a three-parameter scale† • Geographic location by state (and metro vs. nonmetro within each state) based on 5 years of ACS data on rental costs for two-bedroom units • Variation by housing tenure (rent vs. own vs. own outright), including all mortgage expenses in shelter costs	• Differences in family size and number of children and adults using a three-parameter scale • Geographic location by state (from Census Bureau) and six regions within state (authors' calculations from ACS) • Variation by housing tenure (rent vs. own vs. own outright), including all mortgage expenses in shelter costs • Out-of-pocket medical expenses, with differences based on risk factors (elder presence, family size, health insurance, and health status)

Sources.—Isaacs et al. (2010*a*), ITWG (2010), Zedlewski et al. (2010), and Short (2011).

Note.—While the Current Population Survey (CPS) is the source of official national poverty estimates, the American Community Survey (ACS) provides single and multiyear estimates for smaller areas. WIC = Women, Infants, and Children; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; EITC = Earned Income Tax Credit; FCSU = food, clothing, shelter, and utilities; LIHEAP = Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

* Consistent with the SPM, the WPM also considers medical out-of-pocket expenses in determining poverty. The WPM considers these medical expenses in the calculation of the thresholds (i.e., if medical needs are identified as high, the thresholds are constructed high), unlike the SPM, which considers medical expenses in the calculation of resources as a factor reducing resources; however, the spirit and the consequences of these two approaches are essentially the same.

† The three SPM parameters are: two parents, two children; one parent, two children; and multiple adults in multigenerational families, two children (Betson 1996; Iceland 2005).

of work and medical expenses, which differ from the approach of the official measure. The estimates of official poverty statistics presented in this analysis are based on our implementation of the official poverty measure using the IPUMS ACS data (a subsample of the ACS data that the Census Bureau uses) and therefore may differ slightly from official poverty estimates produced by the Census Bureau.

RESULTS

WISCONSIN POVERTY IN 2010

We begin by asking how Wisconsin fared in 2010, using three different measures for estimating poverty: the market-income-only measure, the official poverty measure, and the Wisconsin Poverty Measure. Under the market-income measure of poverty, which includes only earnings and other private income (e.g., investment income, private pensions) and ignores all government benefits and taxes, in 2010 one-fourth of Wisconsin's population would be classified as poor, with more than half (53.8 percent) of the elderly and one-fourth of children living in families that would be considered poor, as indicated by the three tallest bars in figure 1 below.

Using the official poverty measure, which takes into account government cash transfers (e.g., Social Security benefits, unemployment insurance, cash welfare payments), elderly poverty drops dramatically from the market-income-only measure to 7.6 percent. Child poverty is also much lower under the official measure than under the market-income measure. In contrast to the market-income measure, under the official measure the rate of child poverty (18.6 percent) is much higher than the rate of elderly poverty (7.6 percent), in part because fewer cash assistance benefits are provided to families with children than to the elderly in the United States. Under the official measure, overall poverty drops from the market-income measure's estimation of 24.8 percent to 13.0 percent in 2010, between the extremes of elderly and child poverty.

Under the WPM (the last bar in each panel of fig. 1), on the other hand, child and elderly poverty rates are relatively similar to each other in 2010: 10.8 percent for children and 9.8 percent for the elderly, and similarly the overall poverty rate is estimated to be 10.3 percent. The primary reason that child poverty is lower under the WPM than in official statistics is that working families with children are eligible for a broad range of tax cred-

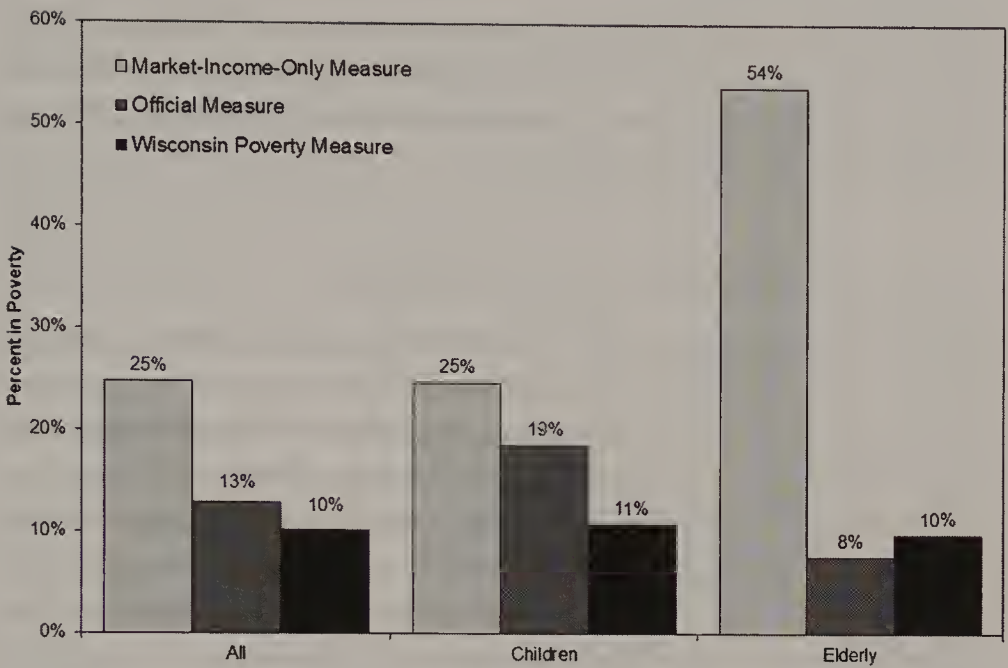

FIGURE 1. Poverty in Wisconsin in 2010 by measure: overall and for children and the elderly. Source.—The authors' tabulations using 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) data.

its (e.g., the Earned Income Tax Credit) and also have markedly higher eligibility and take-up rates of SNAP and other noncash safety net programs (compared to families without children). In addition, the WPM, unlike the official measure, counts the income of unmarried partners as part of the family's resources. This consideration makes a substantial difference in estimates of child poverty. The poverty rate for children living with single mothers and their unmarried partners drops from 46.1 percent under the official measure to 18.3 percent under the WPM.

Thus, NAS-based alternative poverty measures, such as the WPM, do not always result in a poverty rate higher than the official measure; indeed, our analyses of overall and child poverty for 2008 (shown in the next subsection) reveal a lower rate under the WPM than under the official estimate. Because the recession dramatically increased participation in noncash and tax credit programs (which the alternative poverty measures consider but the official measure does not), it is not surprising that the official measure yields higher poverty rates in 2009 and 2010, overall and for children, than the WPM. In contrast, across years, elderly poverty is higher under the WPM than under official measures, for the most part because elderly individuals have substantial out-of-pocket medical ex-

penses that are not considered in the official measure. This result is consistent with the findings of Hutto and colleagues (2011), who find that elderly poverty rates were about 7 percent higher under their alternative measure than under the official measure.

TRENDS IN WISCONSIN POVERTY, 2008–10

Figure 2 shows poverty trends from 2008–10 under all three measures. Under the market-income measure, the overall poverty rate increased from 2008 to 2010, consistent with the recession-driven decline in employment in Wisconsin in recent years. Poverty estimates are considerably lower under the official measure than under the market-income measure. Despite the difference in the size of the estimates for a given year, however, trends in poverty are similar under the official measure and the market-income measure: the poverty rate increases under both measures.

In contrast, the overall poverty rate calculated under the WPM remains essentially the same between 2008 and 2009 and actually declines (from 11.1 percent to 10.3 percent) between 2009 and 2010. One of the

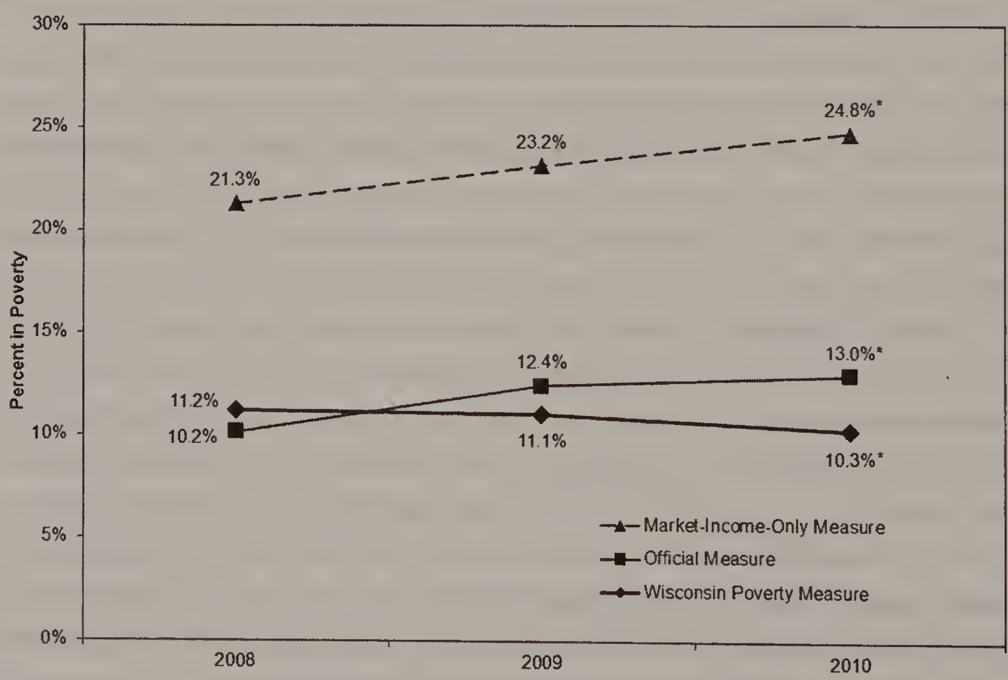

FIGURE 2. Wisconsin poverty rates under three poverty measures, 2008–10. Source.—The authors' tabulations using 2008–10 ACS data. Note.—The statistical significance of the difference between 2009 and 2010 was examined at the .1 level (two-tailed t-tests). * = statistically significant.

important differences between the more comprehensive WPM and the official measure is that the WPM takes into account increases in noncash benefits and tax credits, which offset the drop in market income in Wisconsin in 2010. Our results therefore suggest that policies intended to address the recession and reduce poverty, including work supports and other safety net programs, have indeed been successful, despite persistent economic hardship and worsening labor market conditions in the state. The decline in poverty, as estimated by the WPM, is not just statewide but also occurs in the largest county, Milwaukee, as well as for the most vulnerable age group, children (see below).

Figure 3 shows that this pattern emerges even more clearly for child poverty rates, which dropped from 12.2 percent in 2009 to 10.8 percent in 2010 under the WPM, in contrast to an increase under official statistics and market-income measures of poverty. Despite the recession, which had particularly negative consequences for the incomes of parents of children under 18, expanded benefits provided under ARRA substantially helped families with children avoid poverty and were even more effective in 2010 than in 2009. While ARRA's expanded tax credits were implemented ret-

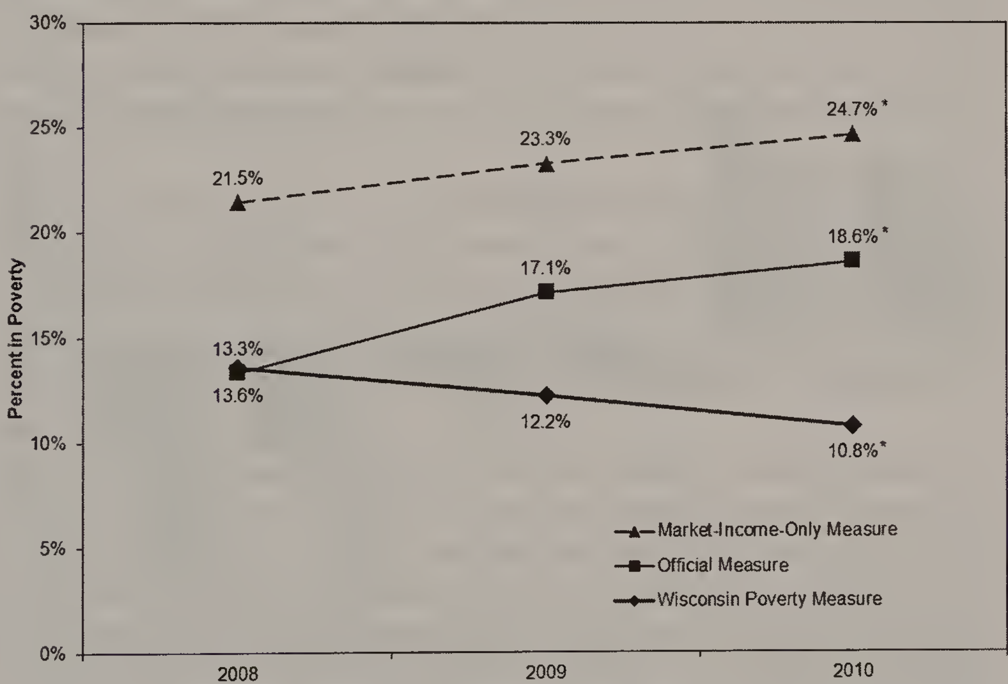

FIGURE 3. Child poverty rates in Wisconsin under three poverty measures, 2008–10. Source.—The authors' tabulations using 2008–10 ACS data. Note.—The statistical significance of the difference between 2009 and 2010 was examined at the .1 level (two-tailed t-tests). * = statistically significant.

roactively for the full 2009 calendar year, ARRA increases in the amount of SNAP benefits received by families did not occur until partway through 2009, and thus the full effect is not observed until 2010. In addition, SNAP caseloads, which include large numbers of families with children, continued to rise during 2010. Because of this combination of higher benefits per family and more families receiving benefits, the antipoverty effect of SNAP benefits was stronger in 2010 than in 2009, contributing to the drop in child poverty under the WPM. Even with these benefits and the decrease in child poverty, however, poverty remained higher among children than among any other age group in 2010, as was the case in earlier years.

Because our key finding is that the poverty rate declines from 2008 to 2010, in contrast to the increase in poverty for the same time period under both the official and market-income measures, it is worth discussing the implications of the composition of the ACS income data for our central findings. The income data include periods before the reference year; this lag in income measurement is not a threat to but, rather, provides support for our key observation: poverty in Wisconsin decreased between 2009 and 2010. The estimate of poverty for 2009 would be even higher if ACS data on income for 2009 covered only January 2009 through December 2009 (instead of January 2008 through November 2009, a period in which residents in Wisconsin were, on average, economically better off than during 2009).[11]

According to our additional analysis, there was no statistically significant change in elderly poverty between 2009 and 2010, whether measured by the WPM, the official measure, or the market-income measure.[12] Elderly individuals are less likely to be employed than younger individuals and thus are generally less affected by recession. In addition, older

11. While our ability to compare estimates for 2008 and estimates for other years is limited (because of slight methodological differences, primarily in the treatment of childcare expenses), additional analyses suggest that the overall poverty rate for 2008 would be lower under the new methodology by about 0.4 percent (and the child poverty rate by about 1.2 percent), but even so, there is no statistical change between 2008 and 2009, when they are measured consistently. This fact, combined with the statistically significant drop between 2009 and 2010, leads us to conclude that poverty, both overall and among children, decreased between 2008 and 2010.

12. To save space, related figures are not presented in this article, but they are available from authors upon request.

individuals are less likely to receive tax credits or noncash benefits and so have been less affected by the ARRA expansion of public benefits.

USING THE WISCONSIN POVERTY MEASURE TO ASSESS THE EFFECT OF POLICIES ON POVERTY

In this section, we estimate what poverty rates would have been if we had not considered noncash and tax benefit receipts or work-related and medical-related resources or expenses. In addition to estimating the effects of benefits, we illustrate the relationship between medical and work-related expenses and poverty, as policies intended to reduce these expenses are as important as safety net programs in improving the economic well-being of low-income families (as considered under all NAS-based measures, including the SPM and the WPM).

Among the benefit programs examined in this analysis, tax credits and refunds received by families reduced overall poverty in 2009 and 2010 the most, by more than 2 percentage points (see fig. 4). This result reflects the expanded tax credits under ARRA, which were fully in effect in both 2009 and 2010. In 2010, SNAP did almost as much to fight poverty

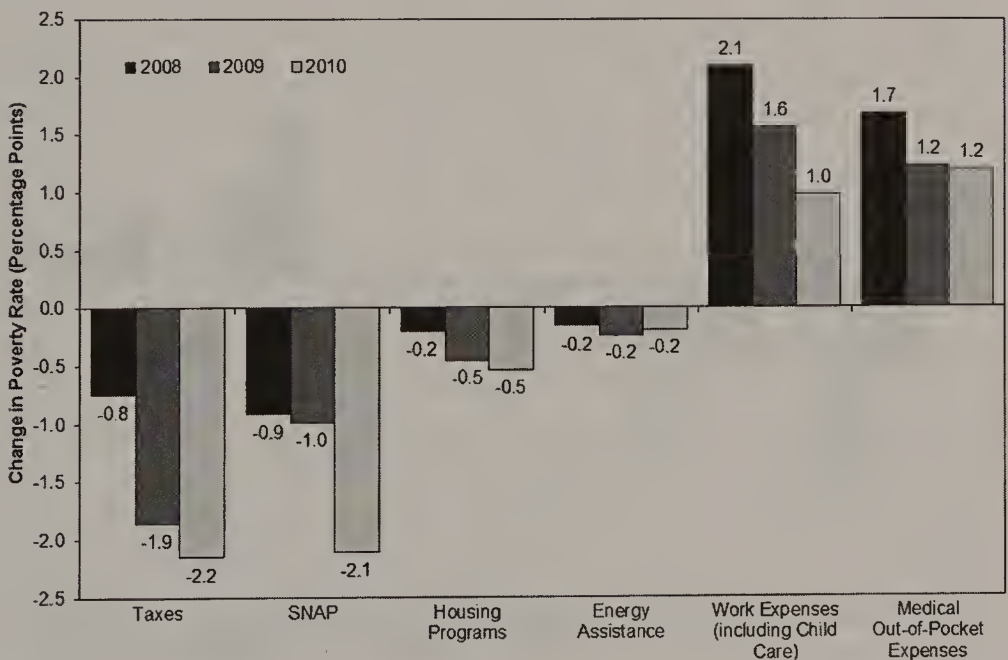

FIGURE 4. The effects of taxes, public benefits, and expenses on the overall poverty rate in Wisconsin, 2008–10. Source.—The authors' tabulations using 2008–10 ACS data. Note.—SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

as did tax credits. SNAP benefits reduced overall poverty in 2010 by twice as much as in 2009, when the ARRA expansions were introduced for part of the year.

Both taxes and SNAP greatly reduced child poverty; this was particularly true in 2010, when tax-related provisions reduced child poverty by 5.8 percent and SNAP benefits reduced child poverty by 4.1 percent (see fig. 5). In contrast, we observe an almost negligible relationship between taxes and elderly poverty; SNAP benefits reduced elderly poverty by less than 1 percent during the time considered (data not shown here but available from authors upon request). This pattern of tax effects is expected because the largest tax credits are focused on working individuals who are parents of minor children. Housing and energy assistance provided modest financial assistance to both children (see fig. 5) and the elderly, reducing poverty by less than 1 percent in any year.

The observed effects of work expenses on poverty are more pronounced for children than for the elderly, but the effects of medical expenses are felt more acutely by the elderly, who are more likely to be in need of more expensive and sustained medical care. In general, out-of-pocket medical expenses (e.g., insurance premiums, copayments for med-

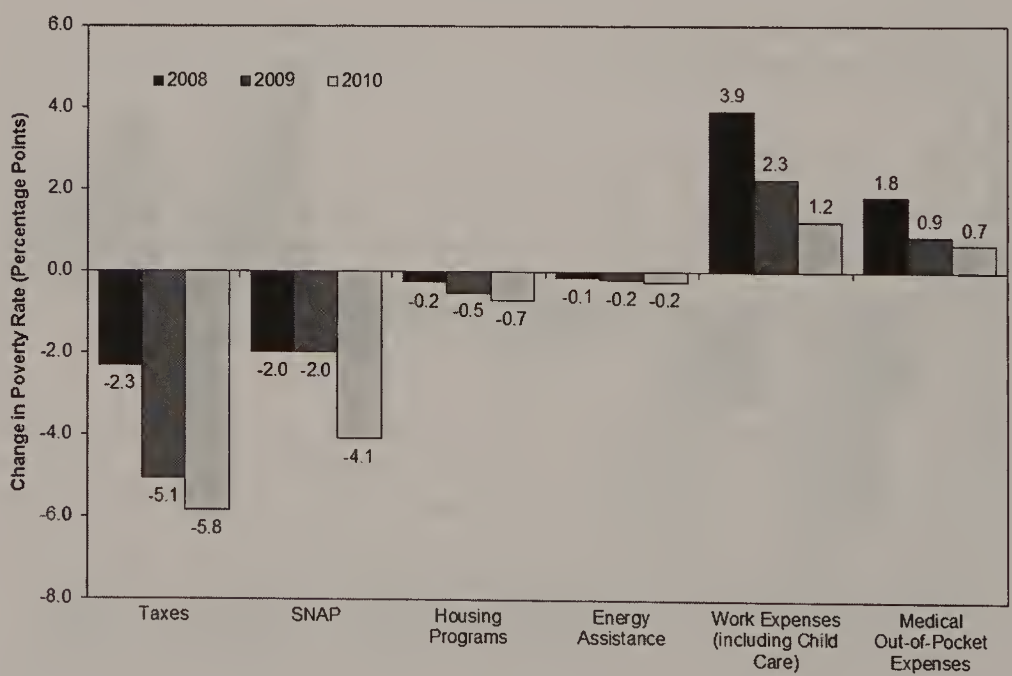

FIGURE 5. The effects of taxes, public benefits, and expenses on child poverty rates in Wisconsin, 2008–10. Source.—The authors' tabulations using 2008–10 ACS data. Note.—SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

ical services, prescription and over-the-counter drugs, and medical expenses not covered by insurance) present a challenge for the low-income elderly. If the elderly did not have to spend money on medical out-of-pocket expenses, poverty rates for them would have been lowered by 3.8 percent in 2008 and 3.6 percent in 2010. Public policies designed to increase the coverage of medical expenses for the low-income elderly can help to alleviate the economic hardship felt by this group.

POVERTY WITHIN WISCONSIN: POVERTY RATES BY COUNTY OR MULTICOUNTY SUBSTATE AREAS

A major strength of the WPM is its ability to assess poverty across regions within the state. Our categorization of substate areas includes 10 large counties and 12 multicounty PUMAs that encompass the remaining areas of the state. While some of the multicounty areas comprise only two counties (e.g., Chippewa and Eau Claire), others require the inclusion of as many as 7–10 more rural counties to create a sample size sufficient to ensure confidentiality and obtain reliable estimates. In 2010, estimates of WPM poverty rates in these substate areas ranged from 16.7 percent in Milwaukee County to 4.2 percent in the area including Ozaukee and Washington counties. Although Milwaukee County's rate decreased from 18.7 percent in 2009 to 16.7 percent in 2010, the county still had the highest poverty rate in Wisconsin (results available upon request).

We were also able to assess poverty estimates for some regions within the state's largest counties by taking advantage of the relatively large sample sizes in ACS data. Examining poverty rates across subcounty regions may reveal variations that are more dramatic within counties than across the 22 areas described above. Using the WPM, we estimated poverty rates for subareas within Milwaukee County, one of the state's most densely populated counties (see fig. 6). Within Milwaukee County, 2010 poverty rates ranged from about 5 percent in some suburban areas to nearly 36 percent in the central city, suggesting segregation of the poor and rich within that county. Further, Milwaukee is surrounded by wealthy suburban counties to the north and west, in which poverty rates are well below the state average (e.g., Waukesha County had a rate of 5.1 percent, and Ozaukee/Washington counties had a rate of 4.2 percent; results not shown but available upon request).

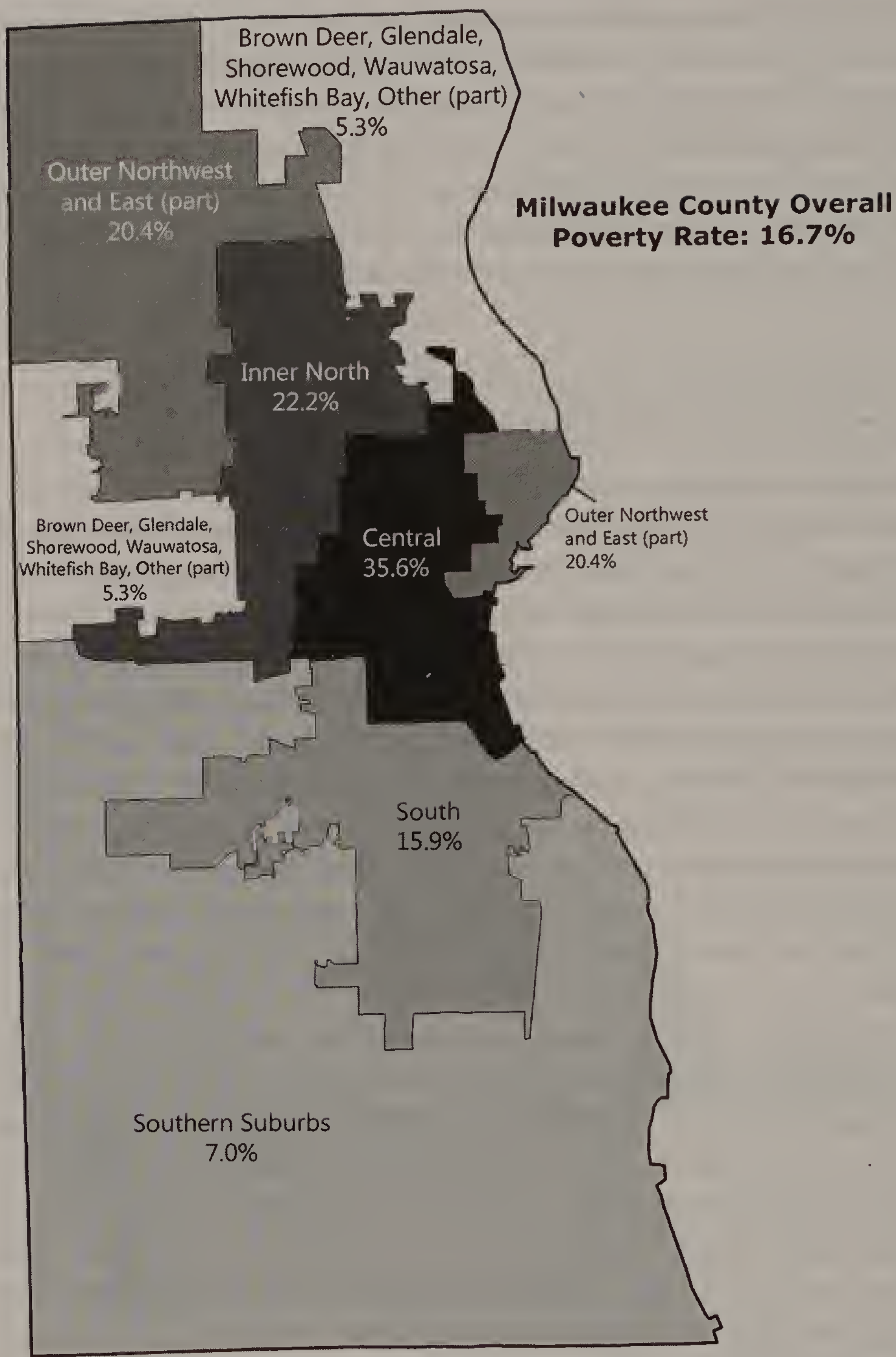

FIGURE 6. 2010 WPM poverty rates within Milwaukee County by Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs). Source.—The authors' tabulations using 2010 ACS data. Note.—The 2010 state poverty rate calculated with the WPM was 10.3 percent. All differences between the regional estimates and the state average as examined here were statistically significant. PUMAs are predefined areas designated by the US Census Bureau that have 100,000 or more residents.

THE ROLE OF POVERTY THRESHOLD COMPARISONS WITH OTHER NAS-BASED ESTIMATES OF POVERTY

Although the WPM revealed a reduction in poverty in Wisconsin both overall and for children between 2008 and 2010, an alternative poverty measure developed by the CEO (2012) revealed that poverty in New York City increased during the same period. There are, of course, many demographic and economic differences between Wisconsin and New York City. For example, New York City had a higher poverty rate before the recession, yet Wisconsin experienced a deeper recession. On the other hand, there are also differences between the two poverty measures; while both use similar definitions of a resource-sharing unit and basically follow an NAS-based approach, they differ in numerous details.[13]

One difference that was of particular importance during the recession was the use of a threshold based on expenses averaged over 3 years (as in the Wisconsin and the original National Academy of Sciences measures) versus a 5-year average (as in the New York City measure and the new Supplemental Poverty Measure). Because the WPM uses the 3-year, NAS-type threshold in Wisconsin, while the analysis of the CEO uses the 5-year, SPM-type threshold, the differences between poverty trends in our base analysis and the CEO analysis do not necessarily suggest that increases in resources available to low-income families were larger for Wisconsinites than for New Yorkers. A direct comparison of the two studies' assessments of poverty trends and their causes is not possible because the two analyses differ somewhat in their construction of poverty thresholds.

To understand the importance of the poverty threshold or line, we conducted an experimental simulation for Wisconsin and compared the results to those of a simulation conducted by the Center for Economic Opportunity (Johnson and Smeeding 2012). Using an anchored threshold so that the Wisconsin and New York City thresholds both increase by the change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), as the official thresholds do, but are not affected by any other factors, the change in both thresh-

13. For example, the New York City measure is adjusted for imputed actual medical expenses and imputed WIC and school lunch benefits, and its thresholds are not adjusted for the differences between homeowners with and without an outstanding mortgage and renters; further, its thresholds are based on 5-year expenses (for more information, see, e.g., Betson, Giannarelli, and Zedlewski 2011).

olds between 2008 and 2010 would be 1.3 percent. Also maintaining the 2008 cost-of-living index adjustments for geographic variation makes the change in poverty rates in Wisconsin and New York City more similar, compared to using the respective alternative poverty measures. Under these conditions, the New York poverty rate increases by .9 percent (rather than 1.4 percent when using CEO's alternative poverty measure) between 2008 and 2010, and the Wisconsin poverty rate decreases by .2 percent (rather than .9 percent when using the WPM) during the time considered. For comparison, the respective increases in the official poverty rates are 2.8 percent for Wisconsin and 2.0 percent for New York City. These findings suggest that some, but not all, of the differences in poverty trends between the two locations are due to differences in the changes in poverty thresholds over time. These results also emphasize the necessity of being cautious when comparing poverty measurement results between two geographic regions using different methods.

A COMPARISON OF WPM ESTIMATES AND WISCONSIN-SPECIFIC SPM-LIKE ESTIMATES OF POVERTY

Understanding how and when the WPM and the Census SPM lead to different estimates is important. These comparisons will help us to identify the advantages of the WPM in reflecting state/local characteristics in estimations of the poverty and antipoverty effects of programs compared to an SPM-like measure used for Wisconsin, or for the rest of the nation, and to distinguish these advantages from estimate differences that result from different methodological choices in the WPM and SPM.[14] The WPM and SPM measures differ in at least two major ways—the use of data (ACS vs. CPS) and the resulting methodological differences concerning the inclusion or treatment of variables measuring resources or indispensable expenses, and the thresholds used (Johnson and Smeeding 2012). First, the SPM, which is based on CPS data, tends to be more advantageous in identifying a comprehensive set of cash and noncash resources, as well as WIC benefits (which we did not include). It is generally expected that the lack

14. It is worth noting that the WPM began 2 years before the SPM and therefore uses different methods but with mostly similar results. The biggest differences as shown below reflect the differences in base unit (two-parent and two-child unit for the WPM vs. two-child units of all types for the SPM) and the time over which expenses are averaged in determining the poverty line (3 years fit the WPM and 5 years for the SPM).

of information about resources in the ACS will lead to an overestimation of poverty rates compared to estimates based on the CPS-based SPM. However, the WPM aligns its simulation of many noncash benefits such as SNAP, LIHEAP, and public housing to administrative data, and so it is more effective than an SPM-like measure in capturing the full effects of these programs. Further, the WPM does a much better job of capturing intrastate differences in living costs, compared to the CPS-based SPM.

The biggest difference, however, is that the SPM uses a lower base threshold, and thus SPM-like measures would be expected to find a higher poverty rate. The WPM uses the two-adult, two-child threshold, the common threshold used at the time the WPM was developed. The SPM uses a two-child threshold, which is considerably lower, because one-adult, two-child families have lower expenditures, even after adjusting for family size. In a comparison of the WPM to an SPM-like measure of poverty in Wisconsin in 2008, Linda Giannarelli and colleagues (2012) find that the difference in thresholds accounted for 1.7 percentage points out of the 3.2 percentage point difference in the two measures.[15] In addition, the WPM also adjusts for students, while the Giannarelli model did not, resulting in higher poverty estimates compared to the WPM estimates.

One difference, of particular importance during the recession, is the use of a threshold based on expenses of a 3-year average (as in the WPM) versus a 5-year average (as in the SPM). In order to understand the influence of decisions regarding thresholds, including the use of SPM's 5-year average of expenditures, Johnson and Smeeding (2012) applied SPM-like thresholds to estimate poverty in Wisconsin between 2008 and 2010. If the WPM used the 5-year average of expenses instead of the 3-year average in the threshold, the estimated poverty rate in 2008 would have been somewhat lower (10.2 percent) than the current WPM estimate (11.2 percent); however, the direction of the difference was reversed in 2009 and 2010.

It is worth noting that the WPM poverty line falls from 2008 to 2009 and then again from 2009 to 2010 (shown in appendix table A1). This decline reflects the fact that as the nation underwent recession, people at the thirty-third percentile of the distribution spent less on food, cloth-

15. The Giannarelli and collaborators' measure also adjusted for underreporting of cash income, something not done by the SPM or the WPM. Giannarelli and collaborators (2012) estimated the overall poverty rate in Wisconsin in 2008 to be 8.0 percent, which is 3.2 percentage points lower than the WPM estimate of 11.2 percent.

ing, shelter, and utilities. We believe that relative poverty lines ought to reflect growth when the economy is good and decline when the economy is faltering; the WPM does just that. The 3-year average nature of the NAS-based experimental thresholds means that the effects of the 2008–10 recession are evident in our 2010 poverty line. In contrast, the SPM-like poverty line (as shown in Johnson and Smeeding 2012) uses a 5-year average, and the poverty line increases from 2008 to 2010 because the longer averaging period includes the relatively good years from 2005 to 2007 in the calculation. As the US recovers from the recession, we expect that expenses at the thirty-third percentile will rise again. However, the 5-year threshold may find that falling expenditures in the first 3 years of the 5-year window pull down the poverty line, just when living standards begin to recover (see Johnson and Smeeding 2012, table 1). It is also worth noting that the Census Bureau's CPS-based experimental poverty series, which goes back to 2001 and uses the 3-year average poverty line for a two-adult, two-child family as a base, as well as the other adjustments common to the SPM and the WPM, shows a similar pattern to the WPM results: flat or declining poverty from 2008 through 2011 (Bernstein 2012).

Altogether, the findings indicate that some, but not all, of the differences in poverty rates between the WPM and the SPM are due to different data and methodological choices but that some of the resulting difference in estimates reflect the ability of the WPM to estimate Wisconsin's condition more accurately. The difference reflects the WPM's value in poverty studies as a valid measure specifically developed for the state that considers the state's policy concerns and priorities.

CONCLUSION

Our analyses provide new insight into poverty and the ability of policy to compensate for market-based hardship after the onset of the Great Recession. The official poverty measure has been widely criticized for its inability to consider the current needs and resources accurately or to reflect the effectiveness of antipoverty policies. The Wisconsin Poverty Project is one of the first comprehensive statewide implementations of the National Academy of Sciences–based alternative poverty measure at the state and substate levels and, as such, this study makes unique contributions to

the understanding of public policy intended to combat poverty. The WPM includes noncash benefits and tax credits, which increased in importance during the recession, as well as other features that reflect the characteristics, interests, and antipoverty efforts in our state. By including such features, the WPM demonstrates the importance of using an improved measure of poverty to examine how effective public policy is against poverty. Simultaneously, it provides estimates of poverty across different regions and subgroups within Wisconsin. This study makes the case that good state or local data and sensible methodological improvements can produce better poverty measurement for states and localities, by demonstrating how and when the WPM and other measures such as the census SPM lead to different estimates. We also distinguish between methodological differences and substantive regional differences within our state in the hopes that our measure can serve as a model for others.

The official poverty measure finds that Wisconsin families had lower levels of cash resources in 2010 than they did in 2009 and, therefore, poverty rose. However, the poverty rates as assessed by the WPM, which also considers noncash benefits and programs intended to offset the increased need caused by the recession, suggest that decreases in employment and earnings in 2010 were considerably offset by increases in refundable tax credits and noncash benefits. According to the WPM, there was a reduction in both the overall poverty rate and the poverty rate for children in 2010. Simply put, targeted benefits were helpful in keeping struggling families out of poverty during the Great Recession in Wisconsin. Our results suggest that SNAP and tax credits were particularly effective in reducing the state's poverty rate, especially for families with children. Even so, our examination of poverty rates across regions in the state reveals deep poverty in certain areas, including central Milwaukee.

The WPM's report of falling poverty rates between 2008 and 2010 is somewhat sensitive to the way the poverty threshold is constructed for Wisconsin. Namely, our poverty thresholds are tied to actual expenditures in the preceding 3 years, which fell during the recession. However, even if we had used a 5-year SPM threshold, we still would have found a decline in poverty in Wisconsin, though not so large a decline as with the 3-year measure. Of course, the trend in Wisconsin poverty does not suggest that the recession did not harm other Wisconsin residents, such as those with moderate incomes. Indeed, the adverse effects of the recession went be-

yond the poor and near-poor and also reached the lower middle class, who experienced declining home values, increased debt levels, and flat or falling incomes in combination with rising expenses.

It is important for researchers and policy makers to ask not only whether an income support policy was effective in reducing poverty but also what solutions might best alleviate long-term poverty as we emerge from the recession. Indeed, we believe that the long-term solution to poverty is a secure job that pays well, rather than extended income supports from the government. As the findings demonstrate, however, in times of need, a safety net that supplements low earnings for families and individuals and helps put food on the table, as Wisconsin's safety net is designed to do, can play an important role in offsetting market-driven poverty. An accurate assessment of the antipoverty effects of current safety net programs is critical for understanding and improving antipoverty policy. The current study contributes to such efforts by developing and applying an improved measure of poverty that can be applied at the state or local level.

APPENDIX

TABLE A1. Wisconsin's Poverty Thresholds for Two-Adult, Two-Child Families, Adjusted for Relative Living Costs

	National NAS-Based FCSU, Two-Adult, Two-Child Family*	Wisconsin's Cost-of-Living Ratio Compared to the National Average†	Wisconsin's NAS-Based FCSU, Two-Adult, Two-Child Family‡
2008	27,043	.9186	24,843
2009	26,778	.9070	24,289
2010	26,528	.9024	23,938

Note.—NAS = National Academy of Sciences; FCSU = food, clothing, shelter, and utilities.

* The national FCSU thresholds represent those based on out-of-pocket expenditures (including repayment of mortgage principal for owned housing), obtained from the Census Bureau's website: http://www.census.gov/hhes/povmeas/data/nas/tables/2010/web_tab5_povertythres2010.xls.

† Each year, we calculate Wisconsin's cost-of-living ratio compared to the national average using ACS data. We call this the statewide adjustment.

‡ We calculated Wisconsin's baseline thresholds by multiplying the national thresholds by our calculated Wisconsin ratio for two-adult, two-child families. For example, $26,528 × 0.9024 = $23,938.

NOTE

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How Much Does Change in the Proportion of Children Living in Immigrant Families Contribute to Change in the Poverty Rate among Children?

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ABSTRACT In the midst of the debate over immigration, some argue that the high poverty rate among children in the United States is mainly due to the large number of children who live in poor immigrant families. Using data from the US Current Population Survey, this study investigates how much of the dramatic decrease in the child poverty rate between 1993 and 2001, and the equally dramatic increase between 2001 and 2010, can be attributed to changes in the proportion of children living in immigrant families. The decomposition analyses show that, although children of immigrants placed upward pressure on the child poverty rate during both periods, they played a negligible role in the fluctuations of the rates. Nonetheless, children in noncitizen families and those with longer residency made larger contributions to the child poverty rate than children in naturalized-citizen or newly immigrated families.

Both the number of immigrants and their share of the US population have been on the rise over the past few decades. The immigrant population nearly doubled in size between 1990 and 2007, growing from 19.8 million to 38.1 million (Fortuny and Chaudry 2009). The number of children in native families grew by 1.9 million between 1990 and 2009 (from 53.7 million to 55.6 million), and the number of children in immigrant families increased by 8.5 million (from 8.3 million to 16.8 million), accounting for nearly 82 percent of the total increase in children during this time (Fortuny and Chaudry 2011). The stream of immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries grew in the 1990s; by 2007, 59 percent of chil-

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dren of immigrants had parents from Latin America (Fortuny and Chaudry 2009; Camarota 2011). As of 2009, immigrants comprised nearly 13 percent of the US population; nearly a quarter of all children came from immigrant families (Fortuny and Chaudry 2009, 2011).

Much of the national debate over immigrants and their children has centered on this population's high incidence of poverty and their use of public services. Studies to date suggest that children in immigrant families are more likely to live in poverty than children in native families (Chitose 2005; Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney 2008; Passel 2011). The child poverty rate rose sharply between 1970 and 1995—from 14.7 percent to 20.4 percent—and more than half of this spike can be attributed to the large increase in number of children of immigrants, especially low-income Mexicans and undocumented immigrants (Ruiz de Velasco, Fix, and Clewell 2000). In 1994, the child poverty rate peaked at 22 percent for the general population (US Census Bureau 2012*b*) but was more than 43 percent for foreign-born children. In the same year, nearly 45 percent of first-generation Hispanic children (the largest subset among children of immigrants) were reported to be poor (Elmelech, McCaskie, and Lennon 2002). In 2003, when the child poverty rate declined to its lowest level in more than 20 years, approximately 54 percent of children of immigrants (compared to 36 percent of children of native-born parents) lived in families with incomes less than twice the federal poverty level (Urban Institute 2006). In 2009, nearly 32 percent of foreign-born children were poor (Macartney 2011); in 2010, 40.2 percent of Hispanic children with foreign-born parents were reported to be living in poverty (Lopez and Velasco 2011). According to Mark Krikorian (2010), of the 14.1 million poor children in the country in 2008, 6 million were children and grandchildren of immigrants, accounting for almost 43 percent of all children in poverty. Based on his calculations, almost all of the 1.8 million increase in the number of children living in poverty (from 12.3 million in 1999) can be explained by an increase of 800,000 children of immigrants and 900,000 Hispanic children with US-born parents (Krikorian 2010).

Because of the growing number of immigrant families and the high incidence of poverty among children living in them, some argue that immigrants—particularly those with low skills and education levels—are the cause of the high poverty rate among US children (Camarota 1999; Rector 2006; Krikorian 2008, 2010). However, a closer look at the literature reveals a much more complex account of child poverty in the United States.

The level of child poverty is determined not only by the proportion of immigrants but also by many other factors, including economic conditions, parental employment and education, family structure, and the composition of the immigrant population (Chapman and Bernstein 2003; Raphael and Smolensky 2009; Peri 2011). In fact, the existing literature suggests that the growing proportion of families headed by immigrants cannot be the sole or the major driving force of the increase in poverty. Rather, the level of child poverty is largely influenced by economic conditions and parental education and employment (Bianchi 1999; Lichter, Qian, and Crowley 2005; Chen and Corak 2008). The composition of the immigrant population has changed as it has grown, making it difficult to isolate the contributions of the growth in the share of children living in immigrant families to the child poverty rate. Overall, the share of naturalized citizens (who are better educated and employed at a higher rate than natives and noncitizens) in the total immigrant population has risen, thus lowering the overall risk of poverty among immigrants (Baker 2007; Passel 2007). Moreover, immigrants who have been in the country for 10 years or more make up a growing share of the total immigrant population. Perhaps not surprisingly then, between 1994 and 2000 immigrant families experienced a larger reduction in the poverty rate than native families (Chapman and Bernstein 2003). The rapid decline of this group's poverty risk more than offsets the potentially negative effects of the increasing share of immigrant families on the child poverty rate (Chapman and Bernstein 2003).

This article investigates how much of the change in the child poverty rate is actually associated with changes in the share of children in immigrant families, and how much is associated with other potential determinants. This study therefore makes an empirical contribution toward unraveling the argument that immigration is either the sole or the most important factor behind fluctuations in the child poverty rate in the United States.

LITERATURE REVIEW

DETERMINANTS OF CHILD POVERTY: ECONOMY, FAMILY, AND EMPLOYMENT

Previous studies identify several major factors that help determine the national child poverty rate: strength of economy, family structure, parental employment, and size of the immigrant population. In general, a robust national economy is negatively correlated with the national poverty rate,

and the unemployment rate and the real wage are indicators of economic strength that are directly related to the working population. In addition, the proportion of single-parent families in the population is positively associated with the national child poverty rate. And, even after controlling for these other factors, studies show that a change in the immigrant population also affects the poverty rate because it influences the percentage of the population with limited education and skills, which are correlated with a high risk of poverty.

Scholars unanimously agree that economic expansion, job growth, high levels of employment, and real wage growth are key in reducing the poverty rate (Blank 2000; Iceland 2003; Lichter et al. 2005). The effect of a strong economy on the child poverty rate was particularly evident in the 1990s (Iceland 2003; Chen and Corak 2008); economic expansion during that period lasted more than 106 months, and job growth—boosted by extremely low unemployment rates and substantial wage growth—helped reduce the poverty rate by providing greater incomes for low-income families (Blank 2000).

Family structure is another important factor in considering poverty, as the risk of poverty is strongly associated with family structure (McLanahan 1985; Lichter and Landale 1995; Lerman 1996; Moffitt 2002). Empirical studies on family structure divide families into two groups—single-earner households and multiple-earner households—and show that the rise in single-mother families accounts for nearly the entire rise in the child poverty rate from 1971 to 1989 (Gottschalk and Danziger 1993; Lerman 1996). Adam Thomas and Isabel Sawhill (2002) and Maria Cancian and Deborah Reed (2002) echo this finding by showing that the child poverty rate would have been statistically significantly lower in the 1990s if the percentage of children in single-parent families had remained constant since 1970. Daniel Lichter, Zhenchao Qian, and Martha Crowley (2006) also estimate that child poverty would have decreased further if family structure had remained stable between 1990 and 2000.

Research also documents the role that parental-education levels and work patterns play in shaping the child poverty rate (Bianchi 1999). In their study, Wen-Hao Chen and Milles Corak (2008) observe that in almost all of the 12 countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), increased maternal employment is a consistent force in lowering the child poverty rate, whereas decreased paternal employment and earnings are forces in raising it. Likewise, research on

the United States suggests that there is a positive correlation between increased maternal employment and the dramatic decline in child poverty during the late 1990s. Lichter et al. (2005) find that the rise in maternal employment during this time accounts for about one-third of the decline in poverty for children in single-mother families. The unprecedented employment growth among single mothers in the 1990s particularly benefitted minority and at-risk children, including those living with mothers who had little education (Gunderson and Ziliak 2004; Lichter et al. 2005).

SHARE OF IMMIGRATION AS A DETERMINANT OF THE CHILD POVERTY RATE

There is evidence that the number of immigrants relative to the total population positively affects the poverty rate, because many immigrants have low education levels and lack the skills valued by the US labor market. In reviewing the empirical evidence on the effects of immigration and the national poverty rate, three studies are particularly useful for the present study: Jeff Chapman and Jared Bernstein (2003), Steven Raphael and Eugene Smolensky (2009), and Giovanni Peri (2011). Although none of these studies specifically deals with the potential effect that the share of immigrants has on child poverty, they shed light on the general relationship between immigration and poverty. Chapman and Bernstein (2003) quantify the effects of immigrants on child poverty by distinguishing the "share effect" from the "income effect." That is, they explain that an increase of immigrants as a share of the population affects the poverty rate (the share effect) but also that the effect can be offset by trends in immigrants' personal income and poverty status (the income effect). Based on the March Current Population Survey (CPS) of 1994 and 2000, Chapman and Bernstein (2003) show that the poverty rate fell about 4 times faster for recent immigrants compared to natives and 2.7 times faster for all immigrants. Their analysis decomposes the separate contributions of the share and income effects to the overall poverty rate and reveals that the decline in the immigrant poverty rate (the income effect) more than offset the share effect in those years. The net result is that immigration actually lowered the national poverty rate.

A similar study by Raphael and Smolensky (2009) focuses primarily on changes in the native-born poverty rate as affected by labor market competition with immigrants. Because immigrants still compose a minority of the US population and poor immigrants are a minority of that minor-

ity, the compositional effect cannot be large.[1] Using a decomposition technique, Raphael and Smolensky (2009) also quantify the change in the national poverty rate between 1970 and 2005. Their analyses show that although an increase in the share of immigrants tends to increase poverty, the declines in poverty within the immigrant population compensate for those increases. For example, between 1970 and 2005, while the change in the population distribution between natives and immigrants increased the poverty rate by 1.15 percentage points, the changes in poverty rates within these groups reduced the overall poverty rate by 2.09 percentage points, resulting in a net overall decline of .94. The results are similar for all periods between 1970 and 2005, except for 2000–2005, when changes in poverty rates among immigrant and native-born groups brought about a slight net increase in the poverty rate. Nonetheless, the decomposition analyses suggest that immigration has had a modest effect on poverty in recent decades.

Peri's (2011) study, the most recent of the three, simulates the effect of immigration on the poverty rate among native-born children through labor market competition using individual data from the Census and American Community Surveys across skill groups between 1990 and 2000, and between 2000 and 2009. According to Peri's study, immigration had a negligible connection to the national poverty rate for all parameters chosen for his simulations in the periods above. For instance, the proportion of immigrants is associated with a very small reduction in the poverty rate (0 to .51 percent) between 2000 and 2009. Considering the change in the poverty rate during the 2000s, the increased proportion of immigrants in the population appears to have a poverty-reducing effect ranging from .07 to .12 percent for natives as a whole. The change is slightly larger for women (ranging from .07 to .13 percent) than for men (ranging from .08 to .09 percent). Overall, however, Peri's results suggest that immigration does not have much influence on native-born poverty at the national level.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The literature points to two important factors on which this study focuses in examining the relationship between the child poverty rate and the changing proportion of children of immigrants to all children. First, I hypothesize that the change in the share of children in immigrant fami-

1. Approximately 12 percent of all US residents were immigrants in 2005, and less than 18 percent of the immigrants were in poverty in the same year (Raphael and Smolensky 2009).

lies did not play a major role in the dramatic changes in the child poverty rate in the 1990s and the 2000s. As stated above, the child poverty rate was at its highest in the early 1990s but declined to a record low at the end of the decade after years of economic expansion. The rate increased again throughout the 2000s, particularly in the late 2000s. Although economic expansion during the mid- and late 1990s accelerated the reduction in the poverty rate among immigrants, the Great Recession in the late 2000s slowed down their progress relative to the general population because immigrants are historically more vulnerable in a weakened labor market (Kim and Tebaldi 2009). This study pays close attention to the dramatic decline in the child poverty rate from 1993 to 2001 and the dramatic increase from 2001 to 2010. Consistent with the findings of prior research, I hypothesize that the change in the share of children of immigrants in the population makes only a minor contribution to changes in the child poverty rate.

Second, the analysis focuses on the relationship between the share of children with immigrant parents and the child poverty rate, hypothesizing that it differs by parental citizenship status and years of US residence. As stated above, not all children of immigrant families face a higher risk of poverty than children of native-born parents, placing upward pressure on the national child poverty rate. Although the poverty rate among new immigrants declines quickly with time in the country and acquisition of citizenship (Passel 2007; Raphael and Smolensky 2009; DeNavas-Walt, Proctor, and Smith 2011), few empirical studies include parental citizenship status and years of US residence in decomposition analysis (e.g., Van Hook, Brown, and Kwenda 2004). This study hypothesizes that children of parents who are naturalized or have lived in the United States for 10 years or more contribute to a reduction in the poverty rate, whereas children of parents who are not citizens, or have fewer years of residence, contribute to an increase in the poverty rate.

METHODS

DATA AND SAMPLE

This study uses the Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the Current Population Survey. The CPS is an annual survey conducted by the US Census Bureau that provides data about demographic characteristics, previous year's income from all sources, work experience, geographic mobility, poverty, and immigration status from a sample of approximately 65,000 households. The CPS is an ideal source for this study because it has been

collecting data on a large group of foreign-born individuals since 1994, making it possible to monitor changes in the poverty rate. The CPS also provides information on participants' nativity, citizenship, and year of entry into the United States. One limitation of the CPS, however, is that it does not allow researchers to identify the legal status of immigrants, although it includes undocumented immigrants in the sample.[2] It would have been ideal to distinguish children of legal noncitizens from children of undocumented immigrants, who are more likely to be in poverty (Kanaiaupuni 2000), but the data limitations made such a distinction impossible. Because the CPS does include undocumented immigrants, the sample of children chosen for this study also includes undocumented foreign-born children and US-born children of undocumented immigrants. Therefore, this study is able to include all types of immigrant families in estimating the effects that immigrants have on the national child poverty rate. Nevertheless, families with undocumented immigrants may be underrepresented because they tend to be reluctant to reply to surveys (Passel, Cohn, and Gozales-Barrera 2012).

I chose to investigate the recent fluctuations in the child poverty rate by studying 3 years: 1994, 2002, and 2011. Note that because the CPS asks respondents about income from the previous year, the CPS poverty statistics refer to the year prior to the survey (i.e., 1993, 2001, and 2010), while all demographic statistics come from the survey itself and thus refer to the years 1994, 2002, and 2011. In 1994, the child poverty rate was at its highest since the mid-1970s, and nativity and citizenship information became available in the CPS. In 2002, the child poverty rate dropped to its lowest in decades, after years of economic expansion in the late 1990s. And 2011, the most recent year available, selects the escalating poverty rate since the Great Recession of the late 2000s. These 3 years, therefore, were chosen to mark the ups and downs of the national poverty rate over the past 2 decades.

The sample for this study is composed of children under age 18 who meet the following criteria. First, each child must be the reference person's

2. According to the most recent estimation by Jeffrey Passel (2011, 27–28), the number of these children is quite considerable: they constitute about 30 percent of all immigrant youth, with undocumented foreign-born children accounting for about 6 percent of immigrant youth and the US-born children of undocumented immigrants making up about 24 percent. About 80 percent of the unauthorized immigrants are from Mexico or other parts of Latin America, and most of the children of unauthorized immigrants are Latino.

own child, grandchild, or relative.[3] Children whose parents' information is missing and children living in households with other family relationships or nonrelatives, such as foster children, are not included in the sample because their families' nativity, citizenship status, or years of residence in the United States could not be identified. A very small percentage of children in native-born families whose reference person or spouse was born outside the country (e.g., native but born in Puerto Rico or other outlying areas) are also excluded from the sample. A total of 260,205 children were chosen: 64,450 in 1994, 106,950 in 2002, and 88,805 in 2011.

VARIABLES AND MEASURES

The dependent variable is poverty, defined as living below 100 percent of the federal poverty guidelines based on family size, as set forth by the Department of Health and Human Services. For a four-person family, the poverty guideline was set at $14,350 for 1993, $17,650 for 2001, and $20,050 for 2010 (US Department of Health and Human Services 2012).[4] The explanatory variables include immigration status (nativity, citizenship, and years of residence in the United States), demographic information (age of the reference person, age of children, race of children, number of children in the family, and family structure), parents' human capital (educational attainment and employment status), and regional economic indicators (state unemployment rate and region of residence).

I divided children into five categories representing family immigration status, based on a combination of the reference person's (not the child's) nativity, citizenship, and years of residence in the country (and the spouse's information, if married). Nativity is determined with the CPS question about country of birth. CPS further classifies reference persons and their spouses who were born outside the United States into either naturalized citizens or

3. The decision to use the reference person rather than the parent of a child was made due to a limitation in the CPS. Because the CPS data identified only one parent on a child's record before 2007, a second parent could not be identified unless he or she was married to the first parent (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics 2011, 2). An attempt to match fathers, mothers, and children in 1994 and 2002 CPS data files resulted in the loss of a large number of children (e.g., children living with cohabiting couples and those not living with parents, etc.). The CPS began including pointers that allow for data line identification of both parents within a household in 2007, which permit matching of two cohabiting parents regardless of their marital status.

4. The dollar values are for the calendar years.

noncitizen immigrants. I calculated approximate years of residence in the United States for these two subgroups based on their year of entry. Following the existing studies, immigrants with fewer than 10 years of residence in the country are classified as recent immigrants (e.g., Van Hook et al. 2004). Children are classified as native-born if their reference person and spouse (if married) are both native-born. Children living with at least one immigrant adult (the reference person and possibly his or her spouse) are defined as living in immigrant families. Therefore, the five categories are as follows: natives, naturalized citizens with at least 10 years of residence in the country, naturalized citizens with fewer than 10 years of residence in the country, noncitizens with at least 10 years of residence in the country, and noncitizens with fewer than 10 years of residence in the country.

The demographic variables include children's age (0–5, 6–12, and 13–17 years) and race and ethnicity (white, black, Hispanic, and other). Also included are family characteristics, including the age of the reference person (younger than 30, 30–39, 40–49, and 50 years or older), family structure (single parent or two parents), highest educational attainment of either the reference person or spouse (less than high school, high school diploma, some college, or college degree or more), number of children under age 18 (one, two, three, or four or more), and employment status. To avoid confounding family structure with hours of paid work per family, the employment status of a family measures whether the head and the spouse of a family together work at least 1,820 hours annually, equivalent to full-time year-round hours of work as defined by the US Department of Labor (1,820 hours = 35 hours per week × 52 weeks; US Department of Labor 2007).

In order to gauge the strength of local economies, I merged annual state unemployment rates for the years 1993, 2001, and 2010 from the US Department of Labor with the CPS microdata. Eight dummy variables that measure regional divisions are included (i.e., New England, Middle Atlantic, East North Central, West North Central, South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central, and Mountain Divisions) to help control for geographical differences in unobservable determinants of child poverty (US Census Bureau 1994).

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

This study uses the nonlinear decomposition technique developed by Robert Fairlie (1999, 2005), who extends the standard Blinder-Oaxaca decom-

position designed for a linear regression. The technique is typically used to decompose changes over time or differences between two groups into various explanatory factors (Fortin, Lemieux, and Firpo 2010). In this case, the technique partitions changes in the child poverty rate between the periods into two components: changes attributable to shifts in population composition (e.g., the proportion of children of immigrants in the population) and changes attributable to shifts in the poverty risk of population subgroups, which could be due to many factors, including changes in social and economic contexts (e.g., discriminatory practices in the labor market; Fairlie 1999, 2005). Such factors remain largely unexplained, however, in part due to the inability to include unobservable variables. This study therefore pays close attention to the first component (changes explainable by the populations' demographic composition) and intends to test whether changes in the share of children in immigrant families made a substantial contribution to changes in the child poverty rate during the periods under study and, if so, by how much.

In the decomposition analyses below, the relationship between the share of immigrants in the population and the change in the child poverty rate was estimated using a logistic regression analysis at the individual level.[5] I obtained the coefficients of explanatory variables (e.g., being an immigrant) in the model and the probability of living in poverty by logistic regression. These coefficients were then used, with the population means, to simulate the counterfactual child poverty rates that would answer the question of what would have happened to the poverty rate if, say, in 2001 the demographic composition and the risk of poverty remained the same as in 1993 but the share of immigrants in the population changed between the years. An answer to this question provides insight into how change in the proportion of immigrants is associated with change in the poverty rate (Dickens and Ellwood 2003).

Following the guidelines offered by Fairlie (1999, 2005), decomposition was conducted in the following steps. Using the change between 1993 and 2001 as an example, the first step estimated the logit model of the probability of living in poverty, regression coefficients, and the predicted probabilities for both years (1993 and 2001) separately. After sorting both years

5. Analyses did not adjust standard errors for nonindependence due to the clustering of children within families. This study used a sample of more than 260,000 children from more than 110,000 family households. Because of the large number of household clusters, the standard errors with and without clustering were nearly identical.

of data by predicted probabilities and merging them into one data file, I switched the variable distributions from 1993 to 2001 to calculate the mean predicted probability for each variable switch.[6] This simulation process was repeated 100 times to obtain nonbiased estimates of the mean predicted probabilities. It is important to note that in the process of each variable switch, two specifications of analyses were conducted because the regression coefficients (i.e., risks of poverty) could be held constant at either 1993 or 2001 (as shown in tables 4 and 5). The last step calculated the estimated contributions of each variable based on changes in the mean predicted probabilities between the 2 years, as well as the percent contribution of each variable out of total change in the poverty rate. The same steps were followed to decompose change in the child poverty rate between 2001 and 2010.[7] The results of this process provide an estimate of the contribution that the change in immigrant distributions made to the child poverty rate, relative to the contributions made by changes in other variables.

FINDINGS

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS: DISTRIBUTION BY FAMILY NATIVITY, CITIZENSHIP, AND YEARS OF RESIDENCE

As table 1 shows, the percentage of children in immigrant families increased rather dramatically during the period under study, from 16.0 percent in 1993 to 20.2 percent in 2001, and 24.2 percent in 2010. All percent changes except one (the change between 2001 and 2010 for children in noncitizen families with less than 10 years of residence) are statistically significant at the .001 level. In general, these descriptive findings are in line with the findings reported by Passel (2011) in his examination of the demographic profiles of children in immigrant families. The current study finds that of all the children in immigrant families, the subgroup com-

6. The results of this study should not be considered as causal statements. A decomposition analysis is not an attempt to identify causal relationships between the explanatory variables and child poverty rates but to offer insights into how changes in the explanatory variables are associated with changes in rates of child poverty. In addition, a decomposition approach does not answer how the explanatory variables included in the model are correlated with each other. Neither does it examine the total effect of a change taking account of those correlations.

7. For further information on the decomposition analysis conducted in this study, please refer to appendix 1.

TABLE 1. Percentage Distributions of Children by Year and Family Nativity and Citizenship Status, Weighted

	1993 (n=64,450)	2001 (n=106,950)	2010 (n=88,805)	Percent Change (1993–2001)	Percent Change (2001–2010)
Native born	84.02	79.82	75.76	−5.00***	−5.09***
Immigrants	15.98	20.18	24.24	26.28***	20.12***
Naturalized citizens (at least 10 years)	8.09	11.07	13.46	36.84***	21.59***
Naturalized citizens (less than 10 years)	1.16	1.54	1.82	32.76***	18.18***
Noncitizens (at least 10 years)	4.61	5.07	6.53	9.98***	28.80***
Noncitizens (less than 10 years)	2.12	2.49	2.43	17.45***	−2.41

* $p \leq .05$.
** $p \leq .01$.
*** $p \leq .001$.

posed of those living with at least one established, naturalized adult citizen is the fastest growing subgroup. This segment represented 8.1 percent of all children in 1993 and increased to 11.1 percent in 2001, and to 13.5 percent in 2010. Comparatively, the growth of other subgroups remained small and relatively stable. For example, 4.6 percent of all children in 1993 and 6.5 percent of all children in 2010 were from noncitizen, established immigrant families. Only 2–2.5 percent of all children were from noncitizen, recent immigrant families who lived in the country fewer than 10 years.

Table 2 shows that the child poverty rate fluctuates from 21.7 percent in 1993 to 14.9 percent in 2001, back to 21.1 percent in 2010. When the rate is analyzed according to immigration and citizenship status, it shows that children in naturalized, established immigrant families experienced a lower rate of poverty than children in native families in 1993 (18.6 percent vs. 20.1 percent, $p < .01$) and 2001 (12.7 percent vs. 13.5 percent, $p < .05$). In 2010, however, their poverty rates were nearly identical at around 18.5 percent. These descriptive statistics on the level and trend of child poverty are generally consistent with the findings reported by prior research (Van Hook et al. 2004; Wight, Tampi, and Chau 2011; US Census Bureau 2012*a*), which suggests that, as opposed to children in naturalized families, children in noncitizen families experience poverty at a much

TABLE 2. Child Poverty Rate by Year and Family Nativity and Citizenship Status, Weighted

	1993	2001	2010	Percent Change (1993–2001)	Percent Change (2001–2010)
All	21.74	14.87	21.07	−31.60***	41.69***
Native-born	20.10	13.49	18.49	−32.89***	37.06***
Naturalized citizens (at least 10 years)	18.59	12.73	18.53	−31.52***	45.56***
Naturalized citizens (less than 10 years)	30.56	19.45	29.17	−36.35***	49.97***
Noncitizens (at least 10 years)	43.56	31.58	45.43	−27.50***	43.86***
Noncitizens (less than 10 years)	46.58	31.81	44.22	−31.71***	39.01***

Note.—Because income data in the CPS refer to the previous years of surveys, the analyses show poverty rates for 1993, 2001, and 2010 for the data files of 1994, 2002, and 2011 CPS supplements.

* $p \leq .05$.

** $p \leq .01$.

*** $p \leq .001$.

greater rate. The child poverty rate in noncitizen, established immigrant families and the rate in noncitizen, recent immigrant families in 1993 were 43.6 percent and 46.6 percent ($p < .10$), respectively. Although poverty rates for both groups of children decreased to around 31 percent in 2001, they bounced back to nearly 45 percent in 2010. Table 2 shows that although children in naturalized families may escape from poverty as their families stay longer in the country, this might not necessarily be the case for children in noncitizen families. For naturalized families, the child poverty rate in established immigrant families was significantly lower than the rate in recent immigrant families in 2010 (29.2 percent vs. 18.5 percent, $p < .001$), for example. For noncitizen families, however, the difference in commensurate rates was not significant (44.2 percent vs. 45.3 percent).

CHANGES IN CHILDREN'S DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITIONS, BY FAMILY NATIVITY AND CITIZENSHIP STATUS

Table 3 shows the general trends in the demographic composition of children during the study period. Compared to 1993, a higher percentage of children in 2001 were between the ages of 6 and 12 years and 13 and 17 years. The 2010 sample had a higher percentage of older reference persons with 16 percent at 50 or older, up from 12 percent in 2001.

The racial composition of children became much more diverse during the 2 decades under study. The proportion of white children in the child population was around 70 percent in 1993 but dropped to 65 percent in

TABLE 3. Demographic Characteristics of Children, Weighed

	1993	2001	2010	Percent Change 1993–2001	Percent Change 2001–2010
Age of child (years):					
0–5	34.04	30.81	31.82	−9.49***	3.28***
6–12	37.36	38.07	37.27	1.90**	−2.10***
13–17	28.60	31.12	30.91	8.81***	−.68
Age of reference person (years):					
Younger than 30	15.73	14.51	14.03	−7.76***	−3.31**
30–39	42.57	39.40	36.98	−7.45***	−6.14***
40–49	28.58	34.07	33.01	19.21***	−3.11***
50 or older	13.11	12.02	15.99	−8.31***	33.03***
Race/ethnicity of child:					
White	69.16	65.16	57.84	−5.78***	−11.23***
Black	14.73	14.19	12.97	−3.67***	−8.60***
Hispanic	12.02	15.17	21.04	26.21***	38.70***
Other	4.09	5.48	8.15	33.99***	48.72***
Parental education:					
Less than high school	11.82	9.87	9.36	−16.50***	−5.17***
High school diploma	27.97	24.41	21.31	−12.73***	−12.70***
Some college	30.18	29.64	28.64	−1.79*	−3.37***
College degree or more	30.03	36.08	40.69	20.15***	12.78***
Number of child(ren):					
1	25.20	25.58	26.50	1.51+	3.60***
2	39.85	39.87	39.12	.05	−1.88***
3	18.55	17.70	17.50	−4.58***	−1.13
4	16.40	16.85	16.88	2.74***	.18
One-parent family	26.00	26.82	29.92	3.15***	11.56***
At least 1,820 hours of annual work	76.88	83.88	77.33	9.11***	−7.81***
Region of residence:					
New England	4.68	4.53	4.51	−3.21	−0.44
Middle Atlantic	13.54	12.89	12.18	−4.80***	−5.51***
East North Central	17.45	16.18	15.44	−7.28***	−4.57***
West North Central	7.15	6.98	7.00	−2.38	.29
South Atlantic	16.61	17.73	18.28	6.74***	3.10**
East South Central	6.09	6.30	6.02	3.45+	−4.44*
West South Central	11.87	11.95	12.81	.67	7.20***
Mountain Division	6.08	7.02	7.74	15.46***	10.26***
Pacific	16.53	16.41	16.02	−.73	−2.38*
State unemployment rate:					
Mean	6.85	4.75	9.45	−30.66***	98.95***
Median	7.00	4.80	9.30	−31.43***	93.75***

+ $p \leq .10$.
* $p \leq .05$.
** $p \leq .01$.
*** $p \leq .001$.

2001 and 58 percent in 2010. Meanwhile, Hispanic children made up 12 percent of the population in 1993 and increased to 21 percent in 2010. Similarly, those in the category “other race” almost doubled their share over the same period, from 4.1 percent to 8.2 percent. Regarding shifts in education levels, the share of children whose reference person or reference

person's spouse had at least a college degree rose from 30.0 percent in 1993 to 36.1 percent in 2001 and 40.7 percent in 2010. At the same time, the percentage of children whose reference person or reference person's spouse had a high school education or less decreased over time.

Additionally, the percentage of children whose families worked full-time year-round went from 77 percent in 1993 to 84 percent in 2001 (see table 3). The high level of full-time year-round employment in 2001 reflects the exceptionally low average state unemployment rate of 4.8 percent in that year. The percentage of children in full-time year-round working families, however, dropped to 77.3 percent in 2010 when the average state unemployment rate increased to more than 9 percent. The share of children living in one-parent families gradually increased, from 26 percent in 1993 to 26.8 percent in 2001 and 29.9 percent in 2010. Contrary to these compositional changes, the number of children in immigrant families remained relatively stable over time, as did their regions of residence. There were substantial changes in the demographic composition among children during the period, and the following decomposition analyses suggest how these changes contributed to fluctuations in the overall child poverty rate.

LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF CHILD POVERTY BY YEAR

Separate logistic regression models of the likelihood of child poverty that are run by year examine the major factors explaining rates of child poverty and their year-to-year changes (results are shown in appendix 2). I used the coefficient estimates from these models to gauge whether there are year-to-year differences in the risk of poverty and then to calculate the contributions of changes in demographic compositions as related to changes in the child poverty rate. Although all variables entered in the regression models are statistically significant at the .05 level, child poverty is most strongly associated with parental education and family structure for all 3 years. For 1993, the odds of being in poverty for children with adults with less than a high school education was nearly 500 percent higher than the odds for those living with college-educated adults. Also, the odds of living in poverty for children in one-parent families was more than 300 percent higher than the odds for those in two-parent families. In 1993, children in established immigrant, naturalized families experience about a 25 percent higher risk of living in poverty than children with native-born

parents. Yet children in recent immigrant, noncitizen families had nearly 187 percent higher odds of living in poverty in the same year compared to those with native-born parents. Essentially, this analysis provides evidence that children in immigrant families are significantly more likely to live in poverty than those in native families.

The logistic regressions indicate that there are some year-to-year differences in the poverty risk for children. The risk of living in poverty for all children in immigrant families decreased slightly between 1993 and 2001 but bounced back higher in 2010. The risk of poverty associated with living in one-parent families fluctuates in a similar pattern, declining slightly from 1993 to 2001 and going back up in 2010. On the other hand, for children living with adults who have less than a college education, the overall risk of poverty increased from 1993 to 2010. Additionally, children in the other racial category had a higher risk of poverty in 2001 and a lower risk in 1993 and 2010 than white children.

As stated above, the changes in poverty risk between the years account for a part of the changes in the poverty rate between 1993 and 2001 and between 2001 and 2010. The remaining part of the change in the rate of child poverty should be at least partially due to changes in the composition of the population, including the share of children living in immigrant families. The decomposition analyses conducted here are an attempt to tease out the contribution made by the changes in the share of children of immigrants to changes in the child poverty rate.

DECOMPOSITION ANALYSES OF CHANGES IN THE CHILD POVERTY RATE

Table 4 reports the results of decomposition analyses, which estimate if and by how much changes in the share of immigrants contribute to changes in the child poverty rate based on the available data. In decomposing the change in the child poverty rate between 1993 and 2001, results from two scenarios are presented: one using the logits from the logistic regression of the 1993 poverty rate (results shown in table 4, col. 2) and the other using the logits from the regression of the 2001 poverty rate (results shown in table 4, col. 3). Similarly, in decomposing the change in the child poverty rate between 2001 and 2010, the procedure uses separate logits from logistic regressions of the 2001 and 2010 poverty rates (results shown in table 4, cols. 4 and 5).

TABLE 4. Decomposition of Changes in the Child Poverty Rate

Sample Used for Coefficient[a] (1)	1993–2001: 1993 (2)	1993–2001: 2001 (3)	2001–2010: 2001 (4)	2001–2010: 2010 (5)
Estimated poverty rate	21.40	13.67	13.67	19.11
Change in the poverty rate	−7.73		5.44	
Contribution to the change in poverty rate due to changes in the following variables:[b]				
1. Control variables[c]	−1.32	−1.08	−1.22	−1.28
	(−17.13)	(−14.04)	(−22.38)	(−23.60)
2. Race of child	−.72	−.54	.19	.10
	(−9.30)	(−7.02)	(3.52)	(1.92)
3. One-parent family	−2.65	−2.10	−.29	−.30
	(−34.22)	(−27.24)	(−5.28)	(−5.48)
4. Parental education	−.81	−.76	−.94	−1.03
	(−10.53)	(−9.91)	(−17.29)	(−19.00)
5. At least 1,820 hours of annual work	.22	.62	1.95	1.80
	(2.85)	(8.04)	(35.88)	(33.02)
6. Nativity/citizenship/years in United States	−.24	−.12	.20	.48
	(−3.13)	(−1.61)	(3.68)	(8.81)
7. Unemployment/regional division	10.73	7.92	2.84	3.56
	(138.86)	(102.57)	(52.16)	(65.33)
8. All variables (1+2+3+4+5+6+7):[d]	5.21	3.94	2.74	3.32
9. Explained part of change in the poverty rate by all variables: [(8/change in the poverty rate)] × 100	67.40	50.79	50.29	60.99

[a] Two specifications are performed to decompose change in the child poverty rate between the 2 years, each using the regression coefficients of 1 year at a time. The second and third columns present decomposition results using the logits from the logistic regressions of the 1993 and 2001 poverty rates, respectively. The fourth and last columns are decomposition results using the logits from the logistic regression of the 2001 and 2010 poverty rates, respectively.

[b] The contribution of each variable to the poverty rate change is presented in two rows, using two metrics: The top row is the contribution to the child poverty rate and the second row is the contribution as a percent of the change in the child poverty rate. For example, "race of child" contributes −.79 to the child poverty rate, which is −9.3% of the total (−7.73) change in the child poverty rate between 1993 and 2001 (the percentages are not exact due to rounding).

[c] Control variables include age of child, age of reference person, and number of children in the family.

[d] The numbers in the row show the total contribution of all variables in poverty rate.

The finding reported in row 8 of table 4 indicates that if 1993 had the same demographic composition as 2001, the child poverty rate between the years would have declined by 5.2. This means that the demographic changes between 1993 and 2001 included in the model account for 67.4 percent of the total reduction in the child poverty rate between the years (see last row in table 4). Conversely, if 2001 had the same demographic composition as 1993, the rate would have dropped by 3.9, accounting for approximately 51 percent of the total reduction in the rate between the years.

The remaining results provide the estimated contributions of each demographic composition to the reduction of child poverty rate between 1993 and 2001 (shown in table 4). Except for changes in local labor market conditions and the percentage of children living in families with full-time year-round employment, all other demographic composition changes actually suppressed the reduction in the child poverty rate. Although there was only a small increase in the percentage of single-parent families between 1993 (26 percent) and 2001 (26.8 percent), the results show that the increase suppressed the reduction in the child poverty rate by between 27 percent and 34 percent, depending on the estimates.

This article's central finding is that, while the increase in the percentage of children in immigrant families from 1993 to 2001 suppressed the reduction in the child poverty rate, the increase explained only about 1.6 and 3.1 percent of the total reduction. This finding is in line with findings from the previous studies discussed above, which report minor or negligible effects of immigration on overall national poverty rates. The results as a whole suggest that the most important determinant of the reduction in child poverty rate between 1993 and 2001 was local economic conditions, which explains between 103 and 139 percent of the total reduction. This means that if there had been no factors in addition to economic conditions that deterred poverty decline, the rate would have dropped even more than the actual decline.

Columns 4 and 5 of table 4 display the analysis of the increase in the child poverty rate between 2001 and 2010. According to the findings, changes in the demographic and economic condition variables account for about 50 and 61 percent of the total increase, respectively, in the child poverty rate between 2001 and 2010. Of all the factors associated with changes in child poverty rate, local economic conditions explain between 52 and 65 percent of the increase, and the percentage of children living in families with full-time year-round hours of paid work explain between 33 and 36 percent of the increase. The increased percentage of children in immigrant families contributes to the increase in the child poverty rate between 2001 and 2010 but to a fairly minor extent; if 2001 had the same percentage of children in immigrant families as 2010, while holding the rest of the demographic composition factors constant, the child poverty rate would have increased by only .2. Conversely, if 2010 had the same percentage of children in immigrant families as 2001, the rate would have risen by .5. In other words, the increase in the percentage of children in

immigrant families between 2002 and 2011 only contributes between 3.7 and 8.8 percent to the total rise in the child poverty rate during the period.

DETAILED DECOMPOSITION ANALYSES: IMMIGRANTS BY CITIZENSHIP AND YEARS OF RESIDENCE

To take a closer look at the contribution of children in immigrant families to changes in the child poverty rate, I conducted decomposition analyses that divide children of immigrants into categories based on their families' citizenship status and years of US residence. The overall results show that all children in immigrant families, regardless of the families' citizenship status and years of US residence, suppressed the decline in the poverty rate between 1993 and 2001 and helped to increase the rate between 2001 and 2010. As table 5 presents, not surprisingly, children in naturalized families contribute less to changes in the child poverty rate than those in noncitizen families. For example, the increase in the percentage of children in naturalized families explains between .7 and 1.0 percent of the total decline in the child poverty rate between 1993 and 2001, smaller than the contribution (between 1.0 and 2.1 percent) made by children in noncitizen families. However, because the increase of children in naturalized families is larger than in noncitizen families (e.g., 12.6 vs. 7.6 percent in 2010), the findings suggest that each child in noncitizen families exerts a greater influence in hindering the decline in the child poverty rate than his or her counterpart in naturalized families. The last two columns of table 5 show a similar trend. Children in noncitizen families, with a smaller increase in the share of the population, made a greater contribution to the dramatic increase in the child poverty rate between 2001 and 2010 than children in naturalized families. The increase in the percentage of children in naturalized families explains between 1.1 and 3.9 percent of the total increase in the child poverty rate, whereas the increase in the percentage of noncitizen families explains between 2.6 and 5.0 percent of the total increase.

The bottom four rows of table 5 present the results of decomposition analyses that examine the relationship between changing percentages of children in immigrant families and changes in the child poverty rate, by parental citizenship status and years of US residence. Among children of naturalized citizens, children whose families lived in the United States for at least 10 years play a very slightly larger role in explaining changes in the

TABLE 5. Detailed Decomposition of Changes in the Child Poverty Rate by Family Citizenship and Years of US Residence

	1993–2001		2001–2010	
Sample used for coefficient[a]	1993	2001	2001	2010
Contribution to the change in poverty rate due to changes in the following variables[b]				
Nativity/citizenship/years in US	−.24	−.12	.20	.48
	(−3.13)	(−1.61)	(3.68)	(8.81)
Naturalized citizens	−.08	−.05	.06	.21
	(−1.01)	(−.66)	(1.05)	(3.86)
Noncitizens	−.16	−.07	.14	.27
	(−2.12)	(−.95)	(2.63)	(4.95)
Naturalized citizens (at least 10 years of residence)	−.049	−.037	.031	.140
	(−.64)	(−.47)	(.58)	(2.60)
Naturalized citizens (less than 10 years of residence)	−.029	−.014	.026	.068
	(−.37)	(−.18)	(.47)	(1.25)
Noncitizens (at least 10 years of residence)	−.071	−.049	.110	.240
	(−.91)	(−.64)	(2.05)	(4.32)
Noncitizens (less than 10 years of residence)	−.090	−.024	.031	.035
	(−1.20)	(−.31)	(.58)	(.63)

[a] Two specifications are performed to decompose change in the child poverty rate between the 2 years, each using the regression coefficients of 1 year at a time. The second and third columns present decomposition results using the logits from the logistic regressions of the 1993 and 2001 poverty rates, respectively. The fourth and last columns are decomposition results using the logits from the logistic regression of the 2001 and 2010 poverty rates, respectively.

[b] The contribution of each variable to the poverty rate change is presented in two rows: The top row is the contribution to the child poverty rate and the second row is the contribution as a percent of the change in the child poverty rate. For example, "naturalized citizen" contributes −.08 to the child poverty rate, which is approximately −101% of the total change (−7.73) in the child poverty rate between 1993 and 2001.

poverty rate than those whose families are recent immigrants: they suppressed the decline in the poverty rate between 1993 and 2001 and helped to increase the rate between 2001 and 2010 slightly more than their counterparts in recent immigrant families. This is most likely because established immigrant families represent a much larger and faster growing group than recent immigrant families. Among children in noncitizen families, children in families with at least 10 years of US residence also contribute more to fluctuations in the child poverty rate, compared with children in recent immigrant families, particularly in the 2001–2010 period.

Of all children in immigrant families, an increase in the percentage of children in noncitizen families that lived in the United States for at least 10 years made the largest contribution to changes in the child poverty rates during the periods under study. The group grew by nearly 29 percent dur-

ing the 2000s (see table 1), explaining between 2.1 and 4.3 percent of the total increase in child poverty rate between 2001 and 2010. Nevertheless, in all cases, contributions to explained variance are low, suggesting that the percent increase of children in immigrant families cannot be credited as the primary factor explaining fluctuations in the child poverty rates during the periods under study.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study contributes to the growing literature on the relationship between immigration and child poverty by unpacking the contributions that changes in the composition of the immigrant population make to changes in the child poverty rate. First, the overall relationship between increases in children living in immigrant families and the national child poverty rate is weak, as hypothesized. This study provides evidence that the increasing proportion of children in immigrant families is not the primary cause of fluctuations in the child poverty rate, as some scholars argue (e.g., Rector 2006; Krikorian 2010). In fact, additional decomposition analysis shows that much of the changes in the child poverty rate during the study periods are attributable to changes in poverty risks, rather than changes in population composition (see appendix 3 for more detail). The findings indicate that the strength of the economy and parental employment status account for most of the decline in the child poverty rate from 1993 to 2001 and most of the increase from 2001 to 2010. Compared to the contributions of these economic factors, the increase of children in immigrant families as a share of the child population appears to play a very minor role in the child poverty rate. Nevertheless, the findings do not mean that immigration does not contribute to the rise and fall of the child poverty rate. The present analyses suggest that the share of children in immigrant families is related to the child poverty rate but is not the root of child poverty, as is suggested in public discourse (e.g., Rector 2006; Krikorian 2010).

This study also finds that the relationship between the share of children in the US population living in immigrant families and the child poverty rate does not differ by parents' citizenship status and years of US residence. I hypothesized that children of immigrant parents who are naturalized or have lived in the United States for more than 10 years would contribute to a decrease in the child poverty rate, whereas children of im-

migrant parents who are not citizens or have fewer years of residence would contribute to an increase in the poverty rate. Contrary to these hypotheses, the findings reveal that children in all types of immigrant families may have played a role in suppressing the decline in the poverty rate from 1993 to 2001 and in contributing to the increase from 2001 to 2010, regardless of parental citizenship and years of US residence. That is, although the contribution that children in immigrant families made to the fluctuations of the child poverty rate is very small, all of them contributed to raising it. It is notable that children in immigrant families with 10 years or more of US residence made a greater contribution to the rise and fall of the child poverty rate than children in families with shorter residency, despite their low risk of poverty (particularly in the case of those in naturalized families, shown in table 2). This appears to be because they not only composed much larger shares of all children in immigrant families in all 3 years under study, but their share also increased at higher rates between the years, compared to children in recent immigrant families, as shown in table 1.

The findings of this study also suggest that, relative to their much smaller share in the population, children in noncitizen families with at least 10 years of US residence made a greater contribution to change in the child poverty rate than their counterparts in naturalized families; each child in a noncitizen family exerts a greater influence on the change in the poverty rate compared to her counterpart in a naturalized family because of his or her higher vulnerability to poverty. Nevertheless, the overall findings of this study clearly show that it is not children in noncitizen families that drive up the national child poverty rate: children living in immigrant households in general contribute to fluctuations in the child poverty rate only slightly. Again, in the current study, the major factors that drive changes in the child poverty rate are local labor market conditions and parental employment.

The findings of this study should be considered with certain limitations in mind. First, the study is not able to separate children of undocumented immigrants from those of other noncitizen parents due to the CPS data limitations discussed earlier. Although the results of this study on the children of noncitizen immigrants include children with undocumented parents, they may be underrepresented in the results because their parents' survey response rate may be low. Therefore, it would be more helpful

if the analyses could estimate their separate contributions to changes in the child poverty rate. Another limitation is that the findings of this study do not shed light on regional variation in poverty rates or immigration. Due to a concentration of immigrant families in certain states (e.g., California, New York, Texas), it is possible that the national average estimations mask important variations in the level of contributions that children in immigrant families make to state or local child poverty rates (Friedberg and Jaeger 2009).

Despite these limitations, the findings of this study have implications for the direction of federal immigration policies. Most importantly, they challenge the view that children in immigrant families are one of the major obstacles to the country's fight against child poverty. Still, the results underline the dire economic situation of children in some immigrant families, particularly those living in noncitizen or recent immigrant families. The demographic shifts projected for the coming decades make this issue even more important. Children in immigrant families are projected to comprise nearly one-third of more than 100 million children in the United States by the year 2050 (Passel 2011). Because the majority of children in immigrant families, including those in noncitizen families, are currently US citizens by birth and are likely to remain in the country throughout their lives, investing in their human capital and economic outcomes should be an important national agenda.

Appendix 1

NONLINEAR DECOMPOSITION

According to Fairlie (1999, 2005), for a linear regression, the Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition of poverty-rate changes between 2 years, t and $t+1$, can be expressed as

$$\bar{Y}^{t} - \bar{Y}^{t+1} = [(\bar{X}^{t} - \bar{X}^{t+1})\beta^{t+1}] + [\bar{X}^{t}(\beta^{t} - \beta^{t+1})], \tag{1}$$

where $\bar{X}$ is a row vector of average values of the explanatory variables and β is a vector of coefficient estimates. For a nonlinear regression, such as $Y = F(X\beta)$, the decomposition could be written as the following, where N was the sample size for 1 year:

$$\bar{Y}^t - \bar{Y}^{t+1} = \left[\sum_{i=1}^{N^t} \frac{F(X_i^t \beta^{t+1})}{N^t} - \sum_{i=1}^{N^{t+1}} \frac{F(X_i^{t+1} \beta^{t+1})}{N^{t+1}}\right] + \left[\sum_{i=1}^{N^t} \frac{F(X_i^t \beta^t)}{N^t} - \sum_{i=1}^{N^t} \frac{F(X_i^t \beta^{t+1})}{N^t}\right]. \quad (2)$$

In equations (1) and (2), the first term in brackets represents the part of poverty-rate change caused by year-to-year changes in the distributions of the entire set of independent variables X, and the second term represents the other part, caused by changes in subgroup poverty risks. The decomposition could be calculated by substituting the average probability of poverty for $\bar{Y}$, the logistic function for F, and the coefficient estimates for β.

To identify immigrants' contributions to poverty-rate changes, it was necessary to add a calculation that could distinguish between the contributions of specific independent variables. According to Fairlie (1999, 2005), the contribution of each variable was equal to the change in the average predicted probability, by replacing the year t distribution with the $t + 1$ distribution of that variable while holding other variables' distributions constant. That is, if X was assumed to include both X_1 and X_2, the independent contributions of X_1 and X_2 to poverty-rate change could be expressed as shown in equations (3) and (4), respectively:

$$\frac{1}{N^{t+1}} \sum_{i=1}^{N^{t+1}} F\left(X_{1_i}^t \beta_1^{t+1} + X_{2_i}^{t+1} \beta_2^{t+1}\right) - F\left(X_{1_i}^{t+1} \beta_1^{t+1} + X_{2_i}^{t+1} \beta_2^{t+1}\right) \text{ and} \quad (3)$$

$$\frac{1}{N^{t+1}} \sum_{i=1}^{N^{t+1}} F\left(X_{1_i}^t \beta_1^{t+1} + X_{2_i}^t \beta_2^{t+1}\right) - F\left(X_{1_i}^t \beta_1^{t+1} + X_{2_i}^{t+1} \beta_2^{t+1}\right). \quad (4)$$

Note that the calculation of equations (3) and (4) needed to be preceded by matching the year t and $t + 1$ distributions of the respective variables. Matching was performed, for example, by using predicted probabilities for observations in year t and observations in a random subsample of year $t + 1$, with a sample size of year t. Each case of the two samples was rank ordered by its predicted probabilities and matched accordingly. The results of matching largely depended on the sample (year t or year $t + 1$) used to obtain coefficients to estimate the predicted probabilities. To mitigate the potential for skewed numbers, the results were obtained by alternately using year t and $t + 1$ samples in the matching process. Because the matching result was also known to differ by the number of randomly drawn year $t + 1$ subsamples, a large number of random subsamples (n = 100) was used for decomposition (Fairlie 1999, 2005).

Appendix 2

Table B1. Odds Ratios of Logistic Regression of the Child Poverty Rate

	1993 (N=64,450)	2001 (N=106,950)	2010 (N=88,805)
Intercept			
Age of children (years):			
(0–5)			
6–12	.712	.761	.712
13–17	.568	.617	.592
Age of reference person (years):			
(Younger than 30)			
30–39	.671	.729	.654
40–49	.648	.660	.605
50 or older	.583	.611	.684
Ethnicity:			
(White)			
Black	.575	.594	.704
Hispanic	1.223	.978	1.206
Other	.857	1.086	.953
Education:			
Less than high school	5.961	5.416	5.685
High school diploma	3.072	3.198	3.421
Some college	1.905	1.969	2.110
(College degree or more)			
Family:			
(1 child)			
2 children	1.262	1.235	1.301
3 children	2.037	2.381	2.544
4 or more children	3.379	3.134	3.365
One-parent family	4.163	3.709	3.763
At least one full-time worker	.132	.130	.118
Citizenship:			
(Native)			
Naturalized citizen (>10 yr)	1.247	1.180	1.577
Naturalized citizen (<10 yr)	2.382	1.880	2.728
Noncitizen (>10 yr)	1.584	1.662	2.601
Noncitizen (<10 yr)	2.872	2.356	2.826
State unemployment rate	1.065	1.005	1.013
Likelihood ratio (df)	26,529 (29)	29,603 (29)	33,308 (29)

Note.—Region of residence is included in the model but is not shown in the table to save space. Reference groups are in parentheses.

Appendix 3

TABLE C1. Decomposition of Changes in the Child Poverty Rate

	Total percentage point change in child poverty rate	Change attributable to	
		Changes in population compositions	Changes in group-specific poverty rates
1993–2001	−6.87	.17	−7.05
2001–2010	6.20	.33	5.87

Note.—The numbers in the table above are calculated by following the decomposition method used by Raphael and Smolensky (2008). According to the authors, the national poverty rate for year *t*, $Poverty_t$, can be expressed as a weighted sum of the year-specific poverty rates as below. In the equation, pro_{it} is the proportion of the population in year *t* accounted for by group *i* (i.e., children of natives, naturalized citizens, and noncitizens), and $poverty_{it}$ is the corresponding poverty rate for group *i* in year *t*: $\text{Poverty}_t = \sum \text{pro}_{it}\text{poverty}_{it}$. Change in poverty rate can be expressed by the following: $\Delta\text{Poverty} = \sum(\text{pro}_{it+1} - \text{pro}_{it})\text{poverty}_{it+1} + \sum \text{pro}_{it}(\text{poverty}_{it+1} - \text{poverty}_{it})$. The first term on the right-hand side of the equation shows the amount of contribution associated with change in group proportions, and the second term shows the amount of contribution associated with change in group-specific poverty rates.

NOTE

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The New Racial Politics of Welfare: Ethno-Racial Diversity, Immigration, and Welfare Discourse Variation

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ABSTRACT Research on race and welfare focuses largely on characterizations of black and white welfare recipients. Few studies examine racialized welfare discourse beyond the black-white divide. Employing media and archival data from four states during the 1996 welfare reforms, this study finds variation in welfare discourse depending on the perceived race of the beneficiaries. While existing work emphasizes the prevalence of a morality discourse about lazy and hyper-fertile black recipients, and which this study indeed finds predominant in Alabama and Georgia, in California and Arizona, debates centered on Hispanic, Asian, or Native American recipients, and discourse about law-and-order and economic opportunity prevailed. These types of discourse varied in racial character and in their claims about the causes of and solutions for welfare participation. Policy makers used the morality discourse to demand punitive welfare regulations, while law and order and economic opportunity discourses were used to promote immigration enforcement and economic development, respectively.

The US population is undergoing profound transformations. In 2012, nonwhite births outnumbered white births for the first time in history. With ongoing immigration and concomitant growth in the Asian and Latino populations (Frey 2011), US Census officials now predict that the country will be "majority minority" within 30 years (Morello and Mellnik 2012). Researchers have begun to ask how these changes will affect the racial fabric of the country, including the highly racialized world of welfare politics (Reese and Ramirez 2002; Fox 2004; Brown 2013).

Existing research on race and welfare politics offers little insight into these questions. It focuses almost exclusively on black-white relations, examining how black caseload demographics (Weaver and Gais 2002; Monnat 2010; Soss, Fording, and Schram 2011) and media portrayals of

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black welfare recipients (Gilens 1999) affect public support for cash welfare. Studies of racialized welfare discourse also follow a black-white model, examining policy makers' and the media's use of Ronald Reagan's "welfare queen" stereotype: a scheming, hyper-fertile, and lazy black single mother (Neubeck and Cazanave 2001; Hancock 2004). While these studies are pivotal in understanding contemporary welfare politics, they pay little attention to how race relations and racial attitudes relate to welfare beyond the black-white divide. With changes in national demographics and the racial composition of welfare caseloads (Cherlin et al. 2009), the representation of Latino, Asian, and Native American welfare participation in the media and politics is of both scholarly and public importance.

This exploratory study examines whether the discourse used to characterize Latino, Asian, and Native American welfare recipients differs from the long-standing discourse about black work ethic.[1] It also investigates whether distinctive policy prescriptions accompany race-specific discourses. To answer these questions, this article examines media and policy responses to the 1996 welfare reform act in four states with diverse racial compositions: Alabama, Georgia, Arizona, and California. This study employs newspaper content analysis and archival data, and it finds that while policy makers deployed racialized discourse to malign welfare recipients in all four states, discourse content differed dramatically depending on the race of the beneficiaries under discussion; lawmakers and the media expressed different assumptions about the causes of welfare use and suggested different policy solutions depending on the race of beneficiaries.

THE DISCURSIVE POLITICS OF WELFARE

Studies of discursive politics are a critical part of welfare state scholarship. Researchers in this area parse out the language that welfare recipients use to explain their understandings of work, poverty, and welfare participation (Woodward 2008; Lens and Cary 2010). Ethnographic and historical studies reveal the gendered and racialized ways in which case managers characterize their jobs, their clients, and social citizenship (Korteweg 2006; Park and Kemp 2006; Watkins-Hayes 2009). As analyses of the broader public discourse around welfare show, from the earliest days of the

1. I use "discourse" to refer to explanations for individual or group welfare participation; elsewhere in this article, these are referred to as causes of welfare participation.

US welfare state, the frames used by the media, public officials, and citizens in policy debates have interacted with political, institutional, and economic factors to structure welfare policy outcomes (Schram 1995; Mink 1996; Neubeck and Cazanave 2001; Reese 2005; Fox 2012).

Recognizing the potential consequences of welfare discourse for anti-poverty policy and the lived experience of welfare recipients, many researchers are concerned with cultural characterizations of poverty, dependency, and family and how they shape contemporary politics. Past studies reveal long-standing and contentious battles over the meaning and consequences of welfare use (Fraser and Gordon 1994; Mink 1996; Little 1999; Neubeck and Cazanave 2001; Curran 2002; Haney and March 2003; Toft 2010). For much of the twentieth century, welfare discourse depicted poverty as an individual flaw rather than a result of structural inequality (Weir 1990; Gordon 1994; Mink 1996), bolstering a welfare system that relegated poor ethno-racial minorities to the weakest social programs while preserving a more generous safety net for white male workers (Lieberman 1998). Welfare discourse also made moral judgments about welfare recipients a central component of welfare politics and policy making (Hancock 2004). Not surprisingly, stereotypes of blacks' work ethic are strongly related to anti-welfare sentiment in the United States (Gilens 1999; Fox 2004).

There is broad consensus that in the late twentieth century, welfare discourse converged around the racialized and gendered construction of "the welfare queen" (Neubeck and Cazanave 2001; Fox 2004; Hancock 2004). President Reagan coined the term during his 1976 presidential campaign when he described the "welfare queen" as someone who "has eighty names, thirty addresses, twelve Social Security cards and is collecting veteran's benefits on four non-existing deceased husbands. And she is collecting Social Security on her cards. She's got Medicaid, getting food stamps, and she is collecting welfare under each of her names" (*New York Times* 1976, 51). Using media and legislative content analysis, Ange-Marie Hancock (2004) finds that stereotypes describing the fecundity and laziness of welfare recipients resurfaced periodically during the 1996 welfare reform debates, reinforcing advocacy for punitive policies.

The analytic emphasis on black and white welfare participants deflects attention from the racialization of Asian, Latino, and Native American welfare beneficiaries. This oversight is noteworthy given demographic transformations in the US population and emergent scholarship on the new

world of racialized welfare politics. Not only are US racial demographics changing, a larger proportion of whites than nonwhites have disappeared from TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), leaving many states with caseloads composed disproportionately of people of color (Loprest 2002; Cherlin et al. 2009; Mauldon, Speiglman, and Stagner 2012). However, most research continues to look at welfare use in terms of black and white and presumes that the stereotypes associated with black welfare use also apply to other minority groups, just with less intensity (Fox 2004; Soss et al. 2011). No study systematically examines whether and how welfare discourse varies by the race of assumed beneficiaries.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This study examines racialized welfare discourse in four states during the mid-1990 welfare reforms. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) marks the most important shift in federal welfare policy since the 1960s. It terminated the entitlement program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), and implemented the block grant, TANF. In addition to requiring work participation from welfare recipients, welfare reform enacted strict sanctions for noncompliance and placed time limits on welfare receipt. It also categorically denied AFDC/TANF, food stamps, and Social Security Insurance to many noncitizens. Over half of welfare reform's cost savings measures were projected to come from cuts to noncitizen benefits (Hagan et al. 2003).

Welfare reform laid out a broad set of parameters for states to follow in implementing their new welfare policies, but it also gave states flexibility to make programmatic decisions. As a result, in the mid-1990s, policy makers in all 50 states reflected on local poverty conditions and crafted state-specific anti-poverty measures. After the act's passage, state legislatures around the country reassessed their welfare policies, creating conditions ideal for analyzing variation in the social construction of welfare beneficiaries across state and racial lines (Soss et al. 2001).

I analyze welfare reform discourse in four demographically diverse states: Alabama, Georgia, Arizona, and California. To maximize variation in the race of beneficiaries featured in welfare discourse, this exploratory study purposively selected states based on the racial composition of their

caseloads.[2] In the mid-1990s, the vast majority of Alabama and Georgia TANF recipients were black, Arizona had large and long-standing Hispanic and Native American recipient populations, and California had large Hispanic and Asian recipient populations (see fig. 1 for a breakdown of caseloads by race in each state). These states are not necessarily representative of patterns elsewhere, but the comparison allows an assessment of how racialized welfare discourse may vary by the race of welfare beneficiaries and whether race-specific characterizations of welfare beneficiaries accompany different policy prescriptions.

To address these issues requires data on public and policy maker welfare discourse that can be analyzed for frequency and co-occurrence of three distinct themes: the race of the welfare beneficiaries under discussion, the perceived causes of welfare participation, and the proposed solutions for welfare participation.[3] Previous research uses news media content analysis to assess the prevalence of racialized portrayals of policy beneficiaries and the characterization of social problems (Gilens 1999; Misra, Moller, and Karides 2003; Hancock 2004; Chavez 2008; Best 2010). Such detailed analysis allows researchers to parse out the specific characteristics attributed to policy beneficiaries (Hancock 2004) and to measure whether these characteristics are more frequently associated with some social groups than others (Misra et al. 2003). Following this precedent, I conducted media content analysis to analyze the extent to which a traditional racialized morality discourse was used in these states, which vary in their racial composition.[4] I pair this content analysis with analysis of archival policy evidence in order to assess whether a morality discourse was prevalent in the states' policy debates about welfare reform and to explore the possibility that alternative racialized welfare discourses

2. Caseload demographics are not a perfect indicator of racialized welfare discourse. However, debates about Hispanic, black, and European immigrant welfare recipients have historically been far more prevalent in areas with high concentrations of those populations (Fox 2012).

3. According to Benford and Snow (2000), two critical tasks for policy makers and advocacy organizations are to identify the cause of a social problem and to offer a solution that addresses the cause.

4. The coding scheme also tracked the prevalence of nonracial discourses. In Arizona, California, and Georgia, racialized discourses were far more prevalent than nonracial ones. In Alabama, racialized discourses were second to a budget-based discourse citing limited funds for welfare services. Because the data on nonracialized discourses revealed little variation across the states, I confine my focus in this article to racialized discourses.

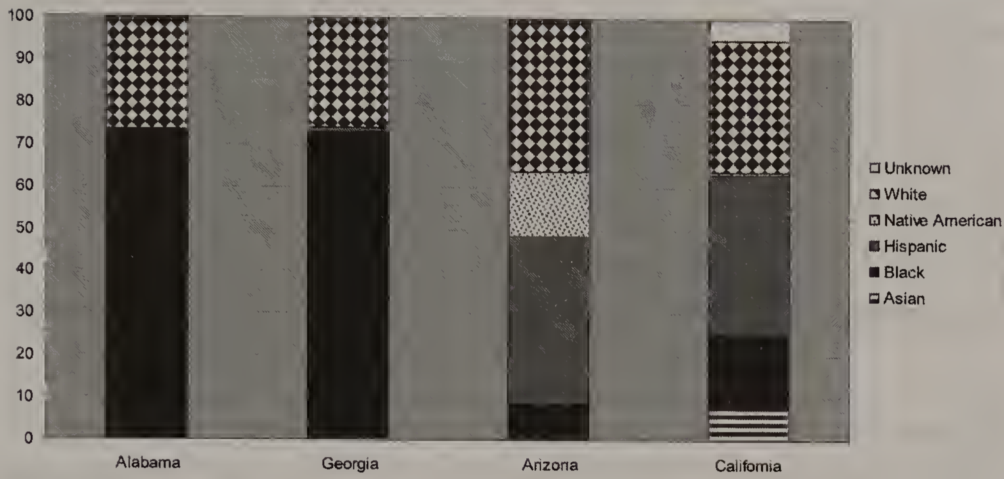

FIGURE 1. AFDC caseloads by race, 1996. Source: ACF 1996

emerged to reflect changing demographics in these states. The archival analysis also permits a clear analysis of the proposed policy solutions that accompanied different types of racialized discourse (Hancock 2004).

The first stage of the study involves a content analysis of 1,000 welfare-related news stories in the largest paper in each state from 1993 to 1997: the *Birmingham News*, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the *Arizona Republic*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. These years mark the height of welfare debates at both the federal and state levels.[5] The newspapers were the largest in their states at the time, their circulation extended statewide, and stories from each paper were routinely carried by local publications. To create the sample of stories, a research assistant and I searched for articles containing the term "welfare" for each state in each year. We retained only those stories that both used the term "welfare" to refer to means-tested assistance for low-income individuals and referred to the state in question, randomly selecting 50 stories per state per year to create the final data set. To map the structure of media discourse, we used Atlas.ti to code the articles. For each state-year, one of us coded the even-numbered stories and the other coded the odd-numbered stories.

I use this data set to assess different types of racialized discourse in the media and to test empirically whether the traditional morality narrative about black fertility and laziness were equally present across the

5. Although Congress officially took up the issue of welfare reform in 1995, state-level debates about Clinton's promised reforms began in 1993. All states had finalized their new welfare programs by 1997.

TABLE 1. Welfare Stereotype Codes

Component	Definition
Drain collective resources	Cash welfare takes up too much of the budget at the expense of "legitimate" groups
Lazy/don't work	Welfare recipients do not work and are lazy
Long-term dependency	Welfare recipients remain on welfare too long, and their children will grow up to be on welfare
Overly fertile	Welfare mothers have too many children even though they cannot afford them; they receive more benefits from having these children
Pathological family	Welfare families are single-parent families or families with illegitimate children; welfare policy encourages out of wedlock births
Drug users	Many welfare recipients have current or past problems with drug abuse
Crime	Many welfare users perpetuate crimes
Teen mothers	Most welfare recipients are teen mothers
Education	Welfare recipients are poorly educated and don't care about pursuing education
System abusers	Most welfare recipients are cheating the system or engaging in welfare fraud
Inner-city resident	Most welfare recipients reside in the inner-city

four states. To measure the extent to which these stereotypes were present in state-level news reporting, my research assistant and I used a modified version of Hancock's (2004) coding scheme for stereotypes about welfare recipients (see table 1).[6] To determine whether and how these welfare stereotypes were racialized, we coded for racial markers employed in media discourse (see table 2). These codes identified when articles explicitly noted the race of an individual, organization, or group of individuals. The intercoder reliability rating for these codes and for the stereotype codes ranges from 88 to 100 percent.

Using Atlas.ti, I measured the frequency of each code in each state as well as the co-occurrence of stereotype and race codes. Overall, close to 70 percent of the individual articles contained at least one racialized welfare stereotype. I report the results using the paragraph, not the article, as the unit of analysis (referred to as the "quotation" in Atlas.ti). Unlike article-level coding, coding by paragraph allowed me to separate out multiple and even contradicting types of discourse within single stories (Hancock 2004). For example, a news story could contain two paragraphs, one in which a governor argues that black welfare recipients are lazy and another in which a caseworker suggests that Asians are a drain on public resources. Coding by story would show that the *black, drain collective re-*

6. Hancock distinguishes between moral judgments about welfare recipients and welfare stereotypes, but this distinction is not relevant for my analysis. I condense her 14 codes into 11 stereotype codes.

TABLE 2. Racial Codes

Code	Defined Terms
Asian	Use of terms *Asian* or *Asian American*; references to individuals from Asian countries
Black/African American	Use of terms *black*, *African American*, *negro*
Latino/Hispanic	Use of terms *Latino/a*, *Hispanic*, and references to individuals from Central and South America
Native	Use of terms *Native American*, *American Indian*, *Indian*, and reference to individual US tribes
White	Use of terms *white*, *Anglo*, *Caucasian*, *Anglo-Saxon*

sources, *Asian*, and *lazy/don't work* codes all co-occur. In reality, the *black* and *lazy/don't work* codes co-occurred, and the *drain collective resources* and *Asian* codes co-occurred. Coding by paragraph permits me to distinguish these co-occurrences and, therefore, to identify specific racialized discourses. Quotation-level analysis is the only way to meaningfully examine the co-occurrence of race and stereotype codes, but this coding strategy is not without disadvantages. Because newspaper paragraphs are often equivalent to one or two sentences, the use of quotations as the unit of analysis may underestimate the frequency of different codes by increasing the total units of analysis.[7]

Most studies of welfare discourse rely on media analysis (Gilens 1999; Misra et al. 2003), but assessing the types of discourse used by policy makers is also critical in determining how pervasive these characterizations of welfare recipients are and whether they are used to justify specific policy interventions. To analyze policy discourse, I supplement media content analysis with extensive archival research, collecting and analyzing over 1,500 pages of archival materials from across the four states. I consulted collections at the California State Archives, the California Regional Oral History Office, the Arizona State Library and Archives, the Arizona State University Library Special Collections, the Arizona State Senate and House of Representatives, the Georgia State University Library Special Collections, the Georgia Archives, and the Alabama Department of Archives and History. At each location, I examined files from the committees charged

7. In paragraph-level coding, a small number of excessively long or code-dense articles can bias the sample. I examined the data set to identify articles meeting these criteria and identified only one such article: an exposé on illegal practices by Mexican immigrants published in the *Arizona Republic*. I removed this article from the data set and replaced it with the next article from the random sample.

with crafting reform legislation and any collections indexed with the words "welfare reform." I also reviewed the papers of the governors, legislators, advocacy organizations, and individual activists whose names repeatedly appeared in the news content analysis and in other archival documents. In addition, I analyzed transcripts of legislative testimonies, committee meeting minutes, speeches, and press releases, since these materials are the most representative, credible, and accurate presentations of policy discourse (Mariampolski and Hughes 1978; Scott 1990). As with the newspaper content analysis, I only analyzed archival documents about each specific state in question. Documents of questionable origin or authenticity were checked for validity against other historical, newspaper, or interview sources and disregarded in the absence of external validation (Mariampolski and Hughes 1978).[8]

Unlike newspaper content analysis, archival data cannot yield quantifiable results because different types of state records are not necessarily comparable.[9] Archival data from policy records did permit me to assess the emergence of discourse in policy debates, to elucidate the key features of such discourse, and to track variation in the racialization of welfare discourse and policy prescriptions. Analysis of these archival documents occurred in three stages. I first coded these documents using the same race and welfare stereotype codes employed in the media content analysis. In the second stage, I reviewed the archival materials again to inductively generate codes for causes of and solutions to welfare participation. This analysis yielded the cause codes that blamed welfare participation on *lax immigration enforcement, limited job opportunities, inadequate domestic violence supports, absent fathers, limited personal motivation, criminal tendencies, over-fecundity,* and a *permissive welfare system.* It also yielded a range of solution codes including *immigration reform, casino con-*

8. In some cases, I supplemented archival data with semi-structured interviews with state welfare reform leaders. I used these data to fill gaps in the legislative and advocacy histories that I constructed from media and archival data and to verify data retrieved from the archives. Interview schedules are available upon request.

9. Archival materials are a more accurate data source for analyzing policy debates and discourses than newspapers. Archival materials offer rich qualitative data but preclude an absolute measure of code frequency because they vary in their credibility and influence. A campaign ad, personal notes made by a policy maker, and an internal legislative memo are not comparable in their audience or their reach. Newspaper stories are also varied (op-eds, e.g., are different from feature stories), but, unlike archival data, all published newspaper stories are made publicly available and follow similar reporting and journalistic guidelines.

TABLE 3. Welfare Discourse Attributes

Discourse	Applied to	Program	Cause/Blame	Solution
Morality	Blacks	AFDC/TANF	Recipients; permissive system	Strict welfare policies
Law and order	Latinos (Arizona)	AFDC/TANF	Lax border enforcement	Immigration enforcement
	Asians (California)	SSI	Weak immigration enforcement	Immigration enforcement
Economic opportunity	Native Americans	AFDC/TANF	Lack of economic opportunities	Investment in jobs

struction, benefits termination, child care and transportation assistance, and *TANF privatization.* In the final stage of document analysis, I attempted to identify whether the cause, race, and solution codes co-occurred in meaningful patterns.[10] In addition to coding the archival documents, I used these materials, along with newspaper stories, to reconstruct the development of policy debates in each state. This process provided important context for the discourse under discussion.

RESULTS

The results reveal substantial variation in racialized welfare discourse across the states during the mid-1990s. The traditional morality discourse about black work ethic predominated in the South. In the West, this discourse was much less common. Inductive analysis reveals that, in California and Arizona, the morality discourse was supplanted by a law and order discourse, which was applied to Latino and Asian welfare recipients, and an economic opportunity discourse, which was applied to Native Americans. These types of discourse are distinguished by their underlying assumptions about what causes welfare use. Each discourse was also accompanied by specific policy prescriptions about reducing welfare caseloads (see table 3).

MORALITY WELFARE DISCOURSE IN THE SOUTHERN NEWSPAPERS

The newspaper content analysis reveals strikingly similar patterns in welfare discourse in Georgia and Alabama in the mid-1990s (see table 4). Ap-

10. Analysis focused on AFDC debates but also included references to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or "food stamps") or Supplemental Security Income (SSI, a cash assistance program for the disabled).

TABLE 4. Morality Stereotype Prevalence

	Alabama	Georgia	Arizona	California
Quotations with any welfare stereotype; % of all quotations in parentheses	758 (24)	625 (20)	415 (10)	409 (10)
Distribution of stereotype codes (%):				
Lazy/don't work	26	26	20	22
Pathological family	17	25	14	21
Drain collective resources	15	5	16	13
Teen mothers	7	11	12	6
Long-term dependency	9	7	13	7
Education	8	10	8	4
Drug users	3	3	4	7
System abuser	6	3	4	6
Crime	2	3	4	6
Overly fertile	3	4	4	4
Inner city	3	2	1	3
Total	100	100	100	100

Note.—The base for each figure is the total number of quotations containing a welfare stereotype. For example, 26% of Alabama's welfare stereotypes were about laziness and lack of work ethic.

proximately 24 percent of quotations in the Alabama sample and 20 percent in the Georgia sample of welfare-related news stories employ at least one morality stereotype. This constitutes approximately three welfare stereotypes per welfare-related news story in Alabama and 2.5 in Georgia.

The Reagan-era stereotype of the welfare queen characterized welfare recipients as engaged in fraudulent and criminal activity. However, the content analysis shows that in Georgia and Alabama, concerns about the work ethic and family structure of welfare recipients dwarfed worries about their involvement in crime, welfare fraud, and drug use (see table 4). The two most frequently occurring codes in both states were *lazy/don't work* and *pathological family*. The third most commonly occurring codes were *drain collective resources* (Alabama) and *teen mothers* (Georgia). These findings mirror Hancock's (2004) study, which found that national media coverage emphasized the poor work ethic and nontraditional family structures of welfare recipients. Together these results suggest that, to the extent that welfare stereotypes continue to be prominent, welfare discourse has shifted from a focus on criminal involvement to a morality discourse that places blame for welfare receipt on the values and choices of welfare recipients.

The following quote from a Georgia news story exemplifies this focus on the morals rather than criminal behavior of welfare recipients. Bemoaning perceived problems with the country's cash welfare system, one resident stated "I rarely encounter a welfare recipient who is dying to

TABLE 5. Percentage of Stereotype Codes Containing a Racial Marker

	Alabama	Georgia	Arizona	California
Asian	0	0	0	29
Black	93	100	18	14
Latino	0	0	45	43
Native	0	0	36	14
White	7	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100

Note.—The base for each state is the number of stereotype codes containing a racial marker. For example, of the Georgia stereotype codes containing a racial marker, 100% of those racial markers were about blacks.

have a job, to have to get up and go out to work every day in order to have a better life" (Burton 1993, A19), deriding welfare recipients for their lack of work ethic. A 1996 article from the *Birmingham News* employs both the *lazy/don't work* and the pathological family frames but also makes an argument that welfare recipients drain collective resources: "The final group [of people on welfare] is made up of those who refuse to work and basically rely on the hearts of others, especially our 'bighearted' government, to pay for their unwise spending and illegitimate children" (Clark 1996, 4A). Such arguments blame the moral failings of welfare recipients, as well the welfare system, for enabling perceived welfare dependency.

To assess the potential racial undertones of this morality discourse, I coded for explicit references to racial categories and measured the frequency with which each racial code co-occurred with a welfare queen stereotype code (see table 5). In both states, negative welfare discourse overwhelmingly focuses on blacks. For example, the following Georgia quotation blames black welfare dependency on a poorly structured welfare system: "Current welfare policy fosters dependency and can cripple poor blacks" (Serb 1993, G6).

Nearly 100 percent of racialized welfare stereotypes in Georgia and Alabama news stories reference blacks, though the actual TANF caseloads in each state were only 72 percent black in 1996 (ACF 1996; see table 5 and fig. 2). The dearth of stereotypes applied to whites may reflect the fact that being white is unmarked in the United States, so direct references to whiteness are quite rare. However, in both Georgia and Alabama welfare news reporting, approximately 25 percent of explicit racial references were to whites. Unlike explicit references to blacks, these references to whites did not accompany welfare stereotypes. These findings

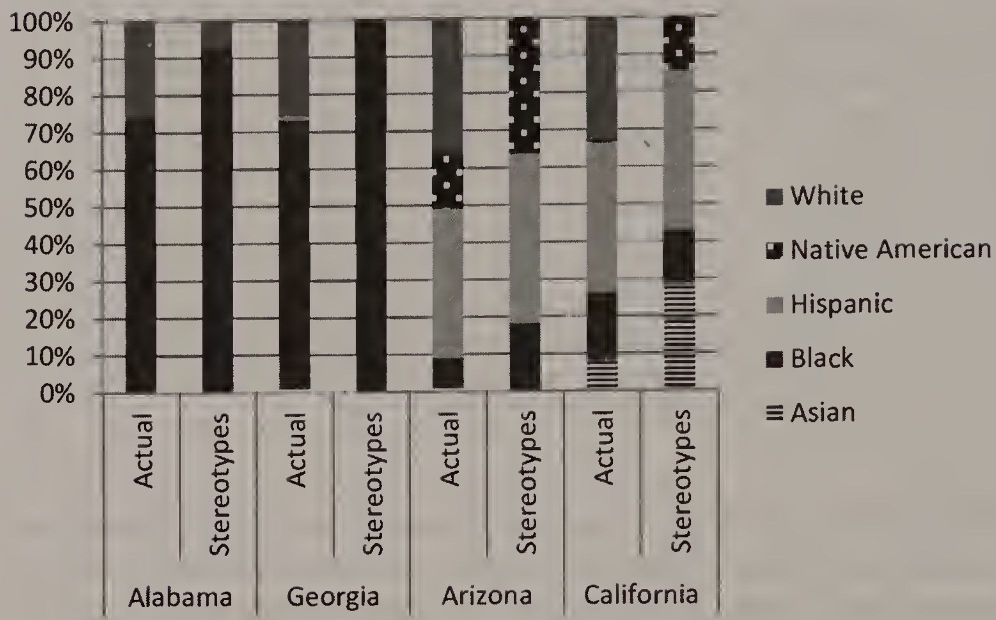

FIGURE 2. Actual demographics of welfare rolls in 1996 versus racialized welfare stereotypes in news stories. Source: ACF 1996. "Racialized welfare stereotypes" refers to the percentage of stereotype codes co-occurring with a race code (table 5).

suggest that the lack of white welfare stereotypes reflects specific racialized constructions of black poverty rather than a cultural norm of avoiding direct references to whiteness.

To summarize, content analysis demonstrates that welfare discourse in these states in the mid-1990s mirrors the reported trends in national-level discourse wherein media reporting highlights the perceived moral failings of welfare recipients and focuses primarily on black recipients (Hancock 2004). Public discourse characterized black welfare recipients as lazy individuals who make poor decisions about reproduction and work, marking a change from the fraud-driven characterizations of the Reagan era. This morality discourse identifies the supposed moral failings of poor blacks and an ill-designed cash welfare system as the primary explanations for welfare participation in these states.

MORALITY DISCOURSE IN SOUTHERN POLICY

Archival analysis revealed that policy makers in Georgia and Alabama, like the media, routinely invoked the morality discourse to blame poverty

and welfare receipt on the failings of black welfare recipients and a problematic welfare system. However, a close look at legislative testimonies, hearing transcripts, and policy makers' private files highlights consequential patterns not found in the media content analysis. First, policy makers largely applied this morality discourse to participants in AFDC and TANF. Second, because policy makers blamed welfare participation on individuals and on welfare programs, this morality discourse validated punitive welfare policies as the appropriate solution to the problem of welfare dependency.

Records and personal accounts from committee debates and legislative hearings confirm the ubiquity of the racialized morality discourse. When asked in an interview by this author (March 27, 2009) to recount the arguments made during welfare reform hearings in Alabama, Michael Sznajderman, a reporter who covered the capitol beat in Montgomery, said that lawmakers viewed welfare recipients as "blacks [who were] just sucking at the government's breast." Highlighting what she thought to be the moral failings of black welfare recipients, Martha Nachman, the head of the state's Department of Human Resources, caricatured the state's typical welfare recipient as "a 15 year old pregnant with the third kid and addicted to crack" (interview by the author, March 26, 2009). These comments reveal the prevalence of beliefs about the moral failings of welfare recipients as the source of poverty and welfare participation.

Local residents also used this morality discourse when they wrote to their elected officials. One Georgia resident wrote in a letter to Governor Zell Miller, "The 'Afro-Americans' think society owes them something today. . . . We freed them from being slaves, is that not enough? What are we supposed to do? Feed all of them, pay for everything they want? They are just as good as everybody else to go work for what they want" (Constituent B 1993, 1). Lawmakers used similar arguments to press for AFDC reforms in their states, demanding that the new cash assistance program, TANF, require welfare recipients to participate in work-related activities as a condition for receiving assistance and deny benefit increases to women who have additional children while on welfare. In an interview with this author (March 26, 2009), Alabama Representative Jim Carns said: "We didn't want you sitting there and not wanting a job and not wanting to be trained to have a job. And let your child watch you do that because the child grows up and does the same thing the parent does." Georgia lawmakers

echoed these sentiments; in a memo to the state legislature, Governor Miller said that "welfare [should demand] the same level of responsibility [from recipients] that it requires from the taxpayers" (Miller 1993, 1). New regulations, like work requirements, were framed as the only legitimate way to promote individual responsibility among the poor.

The morality discourse was so prominent in these states that opponents of punitive reforms were forced to engage with it in their protests. When the Georgia branch of the National Organization for Women issued a policy brief on welfare reform, the organization asserted that the "job requirement [in the bill] is being proposed because many people think that mothers receiving AFDC are lazy and do not want to work. The fact is, families do not need to be forced to work" (National Organization for Women 1997, 2). Other advocates challenged the racial underpinnings of the discourse, declaring, as one did in an op-ed feature, that punitive welfare reform efforts are "racist and condescending" (Hart 1995). These advocates responded directly to the morality discourse, evidencing its saturation of political debates and its connection to calls for strict limits on welfare participation.

MORALITY WELFARE DISCOURSE IN ARIZONA AND CALIFORNIA NEWSPAPERS

Media content analysis reveals that welfare discourse was more complex in California and Arizona. Like in Georgia and Alabama, the *lazy/don't work* and *pathological family* codes are among the most frequently occurring, joined by *drain collective resources*. These findings suggest some coherence in welfare discourse across diverse localities. However, there is substantial variation in the prevalence of the morality discourse across the states. As table 4 shows, only 10 percent of quotations from California and Arizona newspapers contain a traditional welfare stereotype, versus nearly 25 percent of quotations from Alabama and Georgia.[11] These results suggest that the morality discourse may only predominate when welfare beneficiaries are presumed to be black.

11. These differences were present despite the fact that public opinion poll data at the time showed that the citizens of Alabama, Georgia, Arizona, and California were equally supportive of punitive welfare policies (National Election Survey 1996), suggesting that the sources of welfare disapproval were different in the four states.

In the 1990s, discourse about welfare recipient laziness and fertility was less common in Arizona and California, and when it did occur, it tended to apply to nonblack racial minorities (see table 5). For example, media content analysis results show that traditional welfare stereotypes are more likely to accompany discussions of Asians in California than in the other three states. For example, the following *Los Angeles Times* quotation references *Asians* and includes the themes *pathological family* and *system abuser*: "With the use [of] state welfare money, the Hmong men are practicing a tradition of their culture that includes children giving birth to children. This practice points out the need to control reproduction of the poor and especially poor immigrants. They abuse our welfare system" (Norman 1993, 6). In California, one-quarter of racialized welfare stereotypes reference Asians, but Asians composed just 8 percent of the caseload.

In Arizona and California, Hispanics are the most commonly mentioned racial category in the welfare news data set; however, they are mentioned in different ways. Arizona news quotations are more likely than California stories to chastise Hispanic welfare recipients. For example, this Arizona quotation derides Hispanic welfare recipients for their hyper-fertility and misuse of the welfare system: "My neighbor was trying to rent his house for $1,100 a month. Well, here comes this Mexican lady with three bambinos and pregnant with a fourth. He asked her how she would pay, and she said 'no problem' and started talking about all this Section 8 and AFDC money she was getting" (Shaffer 1994, B1). In California and Arizona, the percentage of welfare stereotypes applied to Hispanics is similar to their actual welfare uptake rates. In 1996, Hispanics constituted close to 40 percent of welfare recipients in each state and approximately 45 percent of racialized welfare stereotypes (ACF 1996).

California and Arizona differed in their discourse about Native Americans. In Arizona, Native Americans accounted for 15 percent of AFDC recipients but 36 percent of all welfare stereotypes. These stories tend to focus on the connection between casinos and welfare: "Indian casinos have created more than 10,000 tax-paying jobs . . . and saved the state an estimated $7 million last year by taking people off welfare rolls and putting them on payrolls" (Prescott 1993, A15). In all four states, welfare stereotypes were overwhelmingly applied to racial minorities, not to whites. Whites are underrepresented in welfare discourse given their participation rates. In fact, in Arizona and California not a single quotation

applied a welfare stereotype to whites, even though whites compose over 30 percent of each state's caseload (ACF 1996). In Arizona and California, compared to actual welfare caseloads, Native Americans are overrepresented in quotations containing welfare stereotypes. Blacks were also overrepresented in Arizona (fig. 2).

These findings provide evidence of substantial variation among states in racialized welfare stereotypes. However, the morality stereotypes believed to characterize welfare discourse across the country are far less prevalent in the western states than in the South. These results may indicate a more favorable discourse about welfare recipients in the western states, but the next section presents archival evidence showing that the morality discourse was supplanted by two alternative racialized discourses. That is, the limited use of the morality discourse in Arizona and California reflects not less racialization of welfare debates but different types of racialized welfare discourse, what I characterize as a law and order discourse and an economic opportunity discourse.

LAW AND ORDER DISCOURSE IN THE WEST

Archival records indicate that California and Arizona policy makers primarily maligned welfare recipients for legal transgressions such as immigration violations. However, California and Arizona policy makers in the study period, 1993–97, racialized this discourse differently. Arizona's law and order discourse explicitly referred to Hispanic immigrants, primarily addressing AFDC participation and characterizing Latinos as immigrants who were illegally using cash welfare benefits. In California, the law and order discourse focused largely on Asian welfare recipients. When debates about Asian welfare use arose, policy makers switched from discussing AFDC to discussing SSI, largely ignoring the sizable Asian AFDC and non-Asian SSI recipient populations. This discourse also blamed the families of welfare recipients for violating immigration laws and illegally enrolling elderly Asian immigrants in these programs.[12]

12. My results also show that policy elites in California demonized illegal immigrants for their legal transgressions but that this discourse was not explicitly racialized. While many have asserted the implicit racialization of this discourse, particularly in the 1990s (Jacobson 1993; Ono and Sloop 2002; HoSang 2010), this article only analyzes the explicit racialization of welfare discourse because implicit and explicit references to race have very different policy effects (Mendelberg 2001).

During Arizona's welfare reform debates, the law and order discourse identified immigration, particularly undocumented immigrants and lax immigration enforcement, as the cause of welfare dependency. For example, one Arizona newspaper reported a deceptive scheme in which Mexican immigrants managed to obtain welfare benefits in Arizona through the use of fraudulent documents: "The way the deception works, a Mexican mother will bring her children across the border and enroll them in [school], using the address of an Arizona relative as the family home. The family then applies for social services using false documents" (Associated Press 1995). In a newspaper article circulated to policy makers, one anti-immigrant advocate said: "We have a hemorrhage of people across our southern border . . . costing taxpayers dearly in money spent on . . . welfare. . . . [Some say] a wall would reinforce 'the racist stereotype of Mexican immigrants as criminals.' To me an 'immigrant' is someone who abides by the rules of both countries before he crosses the border. . . . Otherwise, he is, in fact, a criminal" (Holland 1993, A16).

The morality discourse prescribes restrictive welfare reforms as a solution to Alabama and Georgia's social problems, but in Arizona, the law and order discourse about Hispanic welfare recipients accompanied intensive debate about immigration enforcement. In the course of welfare reform debates, policy makers and activists regularly called for stricter border and immigration enforcement as the solution to lowering welfare expenditures. For example, one Phoenix advocate asserted in a letter to the editor: "Illegal aliens stream across our porous borders for jobs, to rob and to assault our citizens, and to use our welfare, hospitals and schools. . . . Solutions? Counterfeit-proof and temper-proof worker ID cards, . . . '1–800-U-R-LEGAL' number that employers can use to verify documents . . . a massive ncrease in the Border Patrol, augmented by the National Guard . . . a 12-foot-high trench wall and fence at the border" (Taylor 1994, B7). The Hispanic-centered law and order discourse accompanied calls for strict immigration enforcement more than demands for policies to regulate the perceived permissive behaviors of welfare recipients.

In California, where Asians constituted 9 percent of the population in 1996 (ACF 1996), welfare opponents also employed the law and order discourse when discussing Asian welfare recipients. The Asian-centered discourse differed from the Hispanic-centered one in two respects. First, despite the fact that only a slightly higher percentage of Asians were SSI recipients than AFDC participants, California legislators and advocates

characterized Asians as SSI recipients, thereby distancing Asians from the morality discourse that is associated with AFDC use. Second, the assumed cause of welfare use differed between the two types of discourse. When anti-welfare advocates targeted Asian welfare users in California, they blamed the extended families of welfare recipients who had failed to fulfill their promise to support their newly arrived immigrant relatives. Many chided middle-class Asian families who illegally signed elderly relatives up for welfare just to reap the financial rewards (Wong 1999). They also chastised the legal sponsors of new Asian immigrants for reneging on their promise to care for their aging relatives.

Policy makers in Sacramento routinely employed this family-centered law and order discourse during welfare reform debates. The two most common reasons given in news reports for denying welfare benefits to noncitizens were that immigrants were fraudulently receiving benefits despite their families' solid socioeconomic status and that the immigrants were coming to the United States specifically to reap welfare benefits (Yoo 2001). Summarizing this discourse, scholar William Wong (1999) reported that, "In 1996, a new villainous image emerged to supplement that of the former welfare queen. This image was of an elderly Chinese immigrant undeservedly getting Supplemental Security Income (SSI). This foreign-looking senior citizen should be supported by his or her middle-class children and not by the U.S. Treasury, the image implied. Thus was born a new kind of welfare cheat." Roy Ashburn, a central figure in the state's Republican Caucus, asserted in the legislature that, "We [Republicans] do have some . . . concerns . . . in respect to providing benefits to legal immigrants, who come to this country under sponsorship, and then expect to be provided with welfare benefits" (Ashburn 1997). These quotations demonstrate notable differences in comparison to the law and order discourse applied to Hispanics in Arizona. They focus on SSI rather than AFDC, despite the fact that Mexican immigrants comprised a larger percentage of SSI recipients than any other immigrant group (Dunn 1995). They also shift blame away from the individual recipient and onto the recipient's sponsoring family.

This family-centered law and order discourse also accompanies different proposed solutions for welfare use: a crackdown on immigrant sponsors and new restrictions on family reunification policies. In his Congressional testimony, Norman Matloff (1996), a professor at the University of California, Davis, asserted:

> The immigrant Chinese senior welfare recipients do not need the money. This is true by *definition*, because at the time a senior immigrates, his/her children must demonstrate to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) that they have the financial resources to be able to support the parent. . . . The noble intentions of "family-reunification" provisions under which the children sponsor their elderly parents to immigrate often bear little or no resemblance to reality. . . . The children who do have their elderly parents living with them often actually make a profit from their parents' SSI checks. . . . Our conclusion will be that the only effective solutions will require some restrictions on family-reunification immigration, especially concerning elderly parents, in concert with other measures.

This testimony characterizes Asian American welfare recipients as victims while disparaging their extended families. It also asserts that immigration reform, not restrictive welfare reforms, would resolve the problem at hand. If discourse about black and Hispanic welfare use blamed the victims for their poverty, the discourse around Asian American welfare use placed blame on their families.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY DISCOURSE IN THE WEST

Welfare discourse about Native Americans in Arizona cohered around a third perceived cause for welfare participation, a lack of economic opportunity. This discourse connected Native American welfare use to the economic underdevelopment of reservations. This AFDC-focused discourse argues that Native American communities suffered from isolation, limited investments in Native economies, and a history of persecution, resulting in welfare uptake.

During welfare reform debates, this economic opportunity discourse accompanied arguments about casino expansion. For example, both casino and welfare advocates used Arizona's Fort McDowell Reservation to demonstrate the close connection between tribal gaming and cash welfare. One news story reported that, "Unemployment, which plagued nearly one-third of the tribe before the casino windfall, is virtually unheard of. And state welfare payments once collected by one-fourth of the tribal members, are part of Fort McDowell's past" (*Arizona Republic* 1995, B6). One Native American advocate, in a political debate, said: "Indian people must first be allowed to stand on their feet. . . . There are clear social benefits linked to tribal gam-

ing: it takes people off welfare rolls, creates tax-paying jobs and provides a means of self-sufficiency for Indian people" (Prescott 1993, A15). Citing limited economic development and high rates of welfare use on reservations, political leaders across the state asserted that economic policies, specifically those restricting gaming on reservations, promoted welfare use and denied economic opportunities to Arizona's Native Americans.

The economic opportunity discourse is typically accompanied by calls for the expansion of casinos on reservations and for extended welfare benefits for Native Americans unable to find work. Expansion, according to advocates, "is important in special-needs areas, such as the Navajo and Hopi reservations and in certain other rural communities where jobs are scarce" (Van Der Werf 1993, A1). The economic opportunity discourse thus cites structural causes for Native American poverty and welfare use, suggesting structural remedies rather than policy changes targeted at individual behaviors.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Research on the racial politics of welfare largely assumes that stereotypes about blacks propel welfare politics in a punitive direction (Quadagno 1996; Gilens 1999; Hancock 2004; Katznelson 2005). This article unearths variation in the content and prevalence of stereotypes in welfare discourse. In Alabama and Georgia newspapers, welfare discourse followed predicted patterns, relying on a morality discourse that emphasized the moral failings of black welfare recipients and suggested policy solutions that target the presumed behaviors of welfare recipients. The morality discourse was also evident, in a much more limited way, in Arizona and California, where Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans were more likely to be the focus of welfare debates. While this morality discourse undergirded the punitive welfare reforms that swept through the country in 1996, it is far from the only racialized discourse in operation.

In Arizona and California, at least two other racialized welfare discourses were politically salient. In Arizona, policy makers and the media employed a welfare discourse centered on law and order to condemn Hispanic immigrants seeking public assistance. This discourse targeted the shortcomings of federal immigration enforcement and the illegal transgressions of recipients. Welfare foes in California used a modified version of this same discourse to blame Asian welfare recipients' families for the

welfare participation of Asian immigrants. Arizona welfare opponents employed yet a third discourse to characterize Native American welfare use, one about "economic opportunity." This discourse emphasized that Native American welfare use resulted from limited employment opportunities on reservations and weak public investment in tribal economies.

These distinct types of welfare discourse identified specific causes of welfare use and accompanied calls for specific solutions. The morality discourse identified the moral failings of welfare beneficiaries as the cause of welfare participation. This discourse was paired with calls for stringent welfare policies, such as strict time limits or family caps, to modify the behavior of recipients. On the other hand, the law and order discourse and the economic opportunity discourse accompanied demands for immigration reforms and economic development, respectively. It is worth noting that these different discourses did not neatly fit policy outcomes. While Georgia rapidly adopted some of the country's most restrictive TANF time limits, sanctions, and work requirements in 1997, Alabama, until the early 2000s, adopted the most lenient policies allowed by federal law (Brown, forthcoming). Arizona and California both pursued strict immigration reforms in the mid to late 1990s, even suing the federal government for incurred immigration costs (Sontag 1994). Arizona also granted Native American tribes substantial flexibility in negotiating TANF requirements (Cornell et al. 2001). However, while California adopted some of the country's most expansive welfare programs after the federal welfare reforms, Arizona took a more punitive approach, enacting more restrictive time limits, sanctions, and work policies than federally required (Brown 2013). These policy outcomes suggest that racialized welfare discourse becomes policy-relevant in concert with other political, economic, or institutional forces, a topic worthy of future research.

Nonetheless, these findings are consequential for understanding the complicated relationship between race relations and American politics. Researchers have long recognized that welfare discourse and policies both reflect and create racial inequalities (Quadagno 1996; Lieberman 1998; Soss et al. 2011). The present study suggests that while blacks appear to be the subject of welfare stigma more often than other groups, the tendency of welfare politics to produce and exacerbate inequality stretches beyond the black-white divide. Future research should assess the discourse that surrounds white welfare use and examine whether discourse about Asian and Hispanic welfare use varies depending on the national origin or immigration

status of the perceived beneficiaries. Additionally, because the states analyzed in this study are not necessarily representative of other states, additional research is necessary to examine how racialized welfare discourse relates to policy in other areas. This inquiry is particularly important in new so-called destination states, like North Carolina and Tennessee, which have, unlike California and Arizona, experienced a dramatic influx of immigrants in recent years (Massey 2008).

This analysis also suggests a necessary shift in survey-based analyses of welfare opinion. Existing research typically assumes that the same stereotypes about black welfare recipients apply to Hispanics, just with less intensity (Fox 2004; Soss et al. 2011). The present study suggests that this is only half the story. Welfare stereotypes and discourse are contingent on both race and place. The types of discourse employed in welfare politics differ depending on the race of the perceived welfare beneficiaries and the social construction of these beneficiaries. Welfare discourse about nonblack racial minorities, then, may be just as powerful but take different forms and have different consequences. Shifts in US racial demographics warrant more analysis of welfare politics beyond the black-white divide (Reese and Ramirez 2002; Fox 2004). The present study indicates that researchers must adequately account for the complex nature of racialized welfare discourse in order to assess its prevalence and political effects.

NOTE

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Book Reviews

Community Lost: The State, Civil Society, and Displaced Survivors of Hurricane Katrina. By Ronald J. Angel, Holly Bell, Julie Beaucoleil, and Laura Lein. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. 241. $99.00 (cloth).

In late October 2012, Hurricane Sandy lashed New York City, Long Island, New Jersey, and Connecticut, in what is turning out to be the most devastating storm since Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast. Over a hundred people died in New York City alone; homes were taken off their foundations from Staten Island to the Jersey Shore; a record 8.5 million homes and businesses lost power, some for weeks; and mass transit was paralyzed as subway tunnels were flooded, saltwater damaged aging electronic equipment, and floodwaters washed away railway tracks. Early estimates place the economic damage from the storm at $50 billion, which would make it the second costliest storm, after Katrina, whose damage went over $100 billion. As with Katrina, the social, emotional, and economic impacts fell hardest on the most vulnerable sections of society.

The failure of federal or local officials to adequately maintain or establish needed infrastructure, as with Katrina, greatly contributed to the destruction wrought by the storm. For example, in 2009, 3 years before Sandy, the American Society of Civil Engineers proposed a $15 billion plan to create a series of surge barriers to protect New York City. Experts also called for protecting the city's subways and tunnels, while others pointed to the danger of placing boilers in the basements of hospitals, and public and private houses and apartment buildings, without adequate flood protection. Critics also knew that improving tree-trimming maintenance, let alone placing power lines underground, would greatly mitigate the extent of power outages. Despite being informed of these dangers and needed measures, and fully aware of the increasing vulnerability of the city and region due to rising sea levels produced by global warming, public officials at every level of government did not act to make the needed public investments and regulatory changes. Now, in the aftermath of the disaster,

both Republican and Democratic governors from the affected states are going to Washington demanding a massive federal aid package to help their states recover. This request comes in the midst of a postelection, bipartisan effort to slash the last remnants of the country's already shredded welfare state.

In their timely book, released the same year as Sandy, the authors of *Community Lost* put on trial neoliberal policies and their legitimating ideology that have led to a massive retrenchment of the welfare state. Using the case of Hurricane Katrina, they forcefully argue that its aftermath "showed that a strong and efficient state remains central to our collective welfare and well-being" (9). Challenging self-help-centered neoliberal rhetoric, they argue that local governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have neither the capacity to effectively deliver social services in a crisis nor the wherewithal to make the needed "long-term commitment to addressing those structural challenges of affordable housing, employment for low-skill workers, and public transportation and infrastructure" (198). The authors, through a case study of over 70 displaced New Orleanians in Austin, Texas, after Katrina, provide ample evidence of the failure of neoliberalism to meet human needs, particularly for the most vulnerable. At the same time, they fail to deliver on their promise of addressing how "civil society" might generate a movement to (re)establish in the United States the enlightened welfare state that they so want to see.

To make their case for the need of a strong state, particularly in the face of disasters like Katrina, they draw on the increasingly popular, although often unclearly defined and operationalized, concept of social capital (SC). While recognizing that the concept is often harnessed to legitimate the withdrawal of the state, they argue it is nonetheless useful in addressing the disadvantages faced by the poor and racial minorities in the face of disaster and the need for state intervention. For the authors of *Community Lost*, SC "refers to the potential power inherent in social networks and the collective capacity of members or groups to act instrumentally to further collective and individual ends" (57). They further characterize the social connections at the heart of SC based on their strength and scope. Bonding ties, also called strong ties, are "emotionally and materially supportive relationships" (60) that people have with family and close friends, while bridging or weak ties are less intimate and usually help with making contacts with organizations and individuals at a distance. Low-income fam-

ilies often report a high level of bonding ties, which help people get through difficult times, while they tend, according to the authors, to have lower levels of bridging connections, compared to those with higher levels of human, cultural, and material capital.

The low-income, black Katrina survivors they studied in Austin, who did not have high levels of human capital (educational degrees and job skills), were nonetheless rich in the strong, bonding-ties variant of SC. The authors find from their interviews of their snowball sample of Austin Katrina survivors that these familial and friendship bonds were crucial in surviving the "poverty and disorganization that characterized the poorest wards" (55), from which many of their interviewees harkened. Yet, since poor people's SC was not, for the most part, "transportable" (100), they were at a disadvantage after displacement when compared to those who had more bridging relationships; bridging SC ties, combined with material, human, and cultural capital opened up crucial lines of support for those who had them. Thus, the authors argue, the poor survivors had little agency to, in their words, "engage in instrumental action, both individually and collectively, to control their lives and influence institutional engagements in their own interest" (63). Instead, the oppressive, historically constructed structures of race, class, gender, and norms limited the ability of the poor, mostly black, survivors "to act as autonomous agents" (63). This lack of agency reinforces the authors' central argument that the state must intervene to protect the most vulnerable.

In chapters 4–8, the empirical heart of the book, the authors provide evidence to support their thesis that those with low levels of SC bonding ties were at a distinct disadvantage after Katrina. Drawing on the voices of survivors, we learn of the struggles they faced evacuating from New Orleans; arriving in Austin; and securing housing, employment, health care, and crucial resources such as identification. Through these profiles the authors provide strong evidence of the particular disadvantages that low-income, black survivors experienced. Central to the lives of survivors, particularly the poorest, was the deservedly maligned Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA). The authors comprehensively document the changing and contradictory rules, insensitive treatment of applicants, and failure to coordinate with localities and NGOs, that undermined the agency's ability to fulfill its mission. This failure fell hardest on the poor. For example, the authors show how FEMA's shared household rule, which treated a household as one unit and limited assistance to only

one applicant, was biased against the poor, who often have nontraditional, extended family living arrangements. And government failure was not limited to FEMA. The federal government's "Road Home" rebuilding program used a funding formula based on the prestorm assessed value of homes rather than the cost to rebuild, which put historically redlined and marginalized black neighborhoods at severe disadvantage. Renters, the majority of New Orleanians, were left out altogether from the program. The authors could have strengthened their critique of the Road Home program, and their larger argument regarding the importance of the state, by informing readers that while funded by the federal government, the administration of the program was contracted out to a for-profit corporation. As Vincanne Adams shows in her book *Markets of Sorrow, Labors of Faith* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), the failures of the federal government-financed initiative to assist homeowners were rooted in the profit-making needs of the Shaw corporation that administered the program.

While critiquing big government, the authors do not look to neoliberal, private sector, self-help solutions as the answer. They critique the NGOs, which appear to be the major component of what they refer to as "civil society," for the lack of coordination among themselves; the often insensitive treatment meted out to survivors; and the racist, stereotypical, contemptuous ideas held by not a few NGO officials and frontline case managers. But the most fundamental critique leveled against the NGOs and local government is that they simply do not have the resources to adequately respond to crises. Only the federal government, they repeatedly emphasize, has the capacity to marshal the resources necessary to not only restore survivors to their prestorm state (FEMA's official, yet to be fulfilled, responsibility) but also to address the country's deep social deficits of affordable housing, education, health care, jobs, and infrastructure that confront many Katrina (and Sandy) survivors. In a particularly strong section, the authors underscore the inadequacy of a NGO-led recovery, and the need for massive state intervention, by pointing to the paltry number of homes built by the nonetheless much ballyhooed efforts of Habitat for Humanity, Brad Pitt, and Oprah Winfrey. "They have made only a small dent," the authors point out, "in replacing the three hundred thousand homes lost along the Gulf Coast" (160).

While they make a strong case for state intervention, the authors employ, at times, a liberal, though still problematic, version of the culture of poverty thesis that undermines their defense of the welfare state. This

problem is exemplified in their discussion of public housing, where some of the survivors they followed lived before Katrina. For instance, they erroneously point to the beginning of public housing as the 1949 Housing Act, rather than a decade earlier with the Public Works Administration and the 1937 Housing Act (101). And, consistent with sociologist William Julius Wilson's theory of concentrated poverty (one that has informed and legitimated the federal government's retrenchment of the public-housing component of the welfare state), they argue that public housing placed "low-income people in conditions that often led to crime and social dysfunction" (156). That is, while structural conditions, such as deindustrialization, produce poverty, the concentration of the poor in public housing, in turn, foments a culture that perpetuates it. Thus, one might ask, would the authors see the Clinton administration's literal bulldozing of this component of the welfare state in the name of poverty alleviation and racial desegregation as one that was rightly retrenched? Or is it, as they explain in their sympathetic discussion of the "New Democrats," simply "one of the pragmatic compromises that were necessary to respond to the politically powerful neoliberal movement that preceded them and still exerts great economic and political power" (6)? Clearly, the authors undermine and contradict their unequivocal stand in support of defending and expanding the welfare state by the legitimacy they provide for both the theory of concentrated poverty and the Democratic Party's pragmatic accommodation to neoliberalism.

The negative way in which they frame public housing sheds a critical light on the book's central conceptual tool of SC. The authors argue that low-income survivors enjoyed high levels of bonding SC that helped them survive difficult times in New Orleans. Yet, as noted above with regard to public housing, since bonding among friends and neighbors also creates social dysfunction among the poor, it appears these bonds can do more harm than good. As Susan Greenbaum notes, theories of the "underclass" view poor people's social bonds as "negative social capital" and therefore provide support for federal programs, such as HOPE VI, to "deconcentrate" poor communities by demolishing public housing and dispersing residents ("Poverty and the Willful Destruction of Social Capital," *Rethinking Marxism* 20, no. 1 [2008]: 42–54, 43). In fact, as Greenbaum shows, many social scientists tend to underestimate the social capital and agency of the poor. For example, in New Orleans, as I found in my research and activism, strong ties among public-housing residents were not only used, as the authors document, to help people through tough times but to mo-

bilize in collective action to, for example, protest police brutality or demand that the housing authority provide improved services. Furthermore, even in the diaspora, many public-housing residents were able to draw on their highly networked communities to mount resistance to the post-Katrina mass demolition plans of public housing that federal and local authorities aggressively pushed after the serendipitous displacement of residents (John Arena, *Driven from New Orleans* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012]). The New Orleans poor, especially those in public housing, had more agency, individual and collective, than is recognized in *Community Lost*.

The weakest part of the book, admittedly not their central focus, is their answer to how "civil society" organizations can "alter the status quo" (200) or change the "rules of the game" (207) to improve the lot of the most disadvantaged in our society. More broadly, they want to know how a movement might emerge to challenge the neoliberal agenda and construct a "New New Deal" in the United States that would create a bigger, better, racially egalitarian welfare state. Part of their incapacity to make much headway in addressing these important questions is the use of their second-favorite concept, "civil society," which the authors define as "a wide range of organizations that are neither governmental nor purely market oriented" (10). Like SC, this term also became fashionable during the neoliberal era, possibly because it tends to conceptualize the key conflict as that of the state versus society. But, to effectively challenge Grover Norquist's "starve the beast" (198) agenda, a class analysis of "civil society" is necessary. Although the ruling class has been able to generate a certain level of popular consent to the neoliberal agenda over the past several decades, there is certainly no "powerful anti-welfare sentiment among the electorate," as the authors repeatedly claim, especially since the 2008 bailout of Wall Street (9, 209). Employing a class analysis would allow us to zero in on which social forces advocate for and benefit from the neoliberal austerity agenda and thereby provide a stronger foundation on which to hypothesize potential working-class challenges to the dominant-class's neoliberal capitalist agenda. In contrast, civil society discourse obscures the key social forces that want to defend and expand the welfare state, and about which the authors so passionately write.

In the end, the authors put forward NGOs as civil society's best hope to protect the poor, if not to challenge neoliberalism. But, as they readily acknowledge, the enormous growth in the NGO sector over the past sev-

eral decades is a direct by-product of neoliberalism. As the welfare state has been retrenched, NGOs have emerged, but failed, to fill the gap. More problematically, they tend to be funded by wealthy foundations whose fortunes have been created, or at least enhanced, by neoliberalism's upward redistributive impacts. Thus, unsurprisingly, the best possible scenario the authors envision for the NGOs is that they step back from fundraising and social service delivery and engage in lobbying to get better legislation to protect the most vulnerable.

Despite these shortcomings, the authors of *Community Lost* provide a timely and stimulating analysis of the social costs of welfare state retrenchment. Their detailed study of Katrina survivors displaced in Austin, Texas (whose experience they plausibly argue is representative of other survivors), provides a powerful indictment of the human suffering wrought by the retrenchment of the welfare state. Likewise they show the bankruptcy and inadequacy of private, nonprofit efforts to meet human need in a disaster, despite their good intentions. In this cautionary tale, the authors also provide a glimpse of the human toll that will be produced if the current bipartisan effort to slash the last remnants of the welfare state is implemented, which national leaders are indeed intent on doing, despite large swaths of the population continuing to suffer from the worst capitalist crisis since the 1930s and the latest natural disaster that has just struck the most densely populated section of the country. The job of those who share the sentiments of Ronald J. Angel, Holly Bell, Julie Beaucoleil, and Laura Lein is to build the social power that can take the country and world in a radically different direction.

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Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race. By Joe Soss, Richard C. Fording, and Sanford F. Schram. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. Pp. 368. $81.00 (cloth); $25.00 (paper).

Disciplining the Poor, a volume in the series Chicago Studies in American Politics, is a tour de force. It has won several prestigious awards including the American Political Science Association/New Political Science Michael Harrington Award and the American Sociological Association Oliver Cromwell Cox Book Award. Joe Soss is the Cowles Professor for the Study of

Public Service in the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota; Richard Fording is a professor and chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Alabama; and Sanford Schram is a professor of social theory and policy in the Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research at Bryn Mawr College. All three authors are among the country's most prolific and insightful scholars of social policy, and together they have crafted a work of wide and ambitious scope, combining a superb and nuanced theoretical intensity with historical insight and skillfully amassed empirical evidence. One of the pleasures of engaging with this work of expansive vision and erudition is to encounter academic minds on their sharpest edge. Embodying the very spirit that they prescribe, the authors acknowledge that book was written "through almost daily conversations . . . and a collaboration marked by generosity, respect, and an unflagging willingness to teach and learn" (vii).

The authors began work on the book in 2002 as a study of how welfare reform (the federal 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF]) was playing out at the local level in Florida. The work is located in a long tradition of critical writing on the history and philosophy of the welfare state that includes Francis Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward's seminal work, *Regulating the Poor: The Public Functions of Welfare* (New York: Vintage, 1971), and Loic Wacquant's *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009). *Disciplining the Poor* is a major contribution toward clarifying neoliberal paternalism as a regime type and providing it with a historical framework as it has been developing from 1970 to 2010. In its extensive grasp of detail, theoretical erudition, and deep analysis of racism, in particular, it is more convincing and compelling than other texts to date. The book is much more than the usual theoretical lamentation over neoliberalism, since it makes a watertight case against neoliberalism on the basis of solid empirical research and evidence. Few books actually do this—Wacquant's, for example, does not.

In the introduction, the authors comment that "poverty is more than a blight to be eradicated; it is also a problem of governance" (1). The book's central claim is that poverty has to be managed in our society, but that poverty governance has grown ever mean-spirited and disciplinary in the past 30 years. Their empirical analysis of welfare provision at the local level in Florida conclusively demonstrates that "poverty emerges occa-

sionally in public life as a problem to be solved; the poor exist perennially as subjects who must be governed" (1). Since the elimination of poverty is not possible in a competitive capitalist culture, poverty programs are actually designed to make poor communities more manageable and to shovel the poor into the lower reaches of social institutions. Poverty governance, they explain, is now anchored in the convergence of two movements that masquerade as reform but which are nothing less than severe crusades: paternalism and neoliberalism. Paternalism extends the disciplining moral arm of the state to supervise and tell the poor how to behave if they wish to receive benefits, whether they seek nutritional assistance or housing support. Concomitantly, harsh and unforgiving criminal justice policies have resulted in the United States having the highest incarceration rate of any country in the world, to all intents and purposes another dimension of poverty governance.

Soss, Fording, and Schram provide a luminous and thorough analysis of how the second crusade, neoliberalism, perniciously mutated from its 1970s and 1980s version of a market-engendered laissez-faire outlook to a much more vigorous effort by the state at all levels to organize and colonize the entire society in line with strict market rationality. An example of neoliberal market invasion into all institutions is the academic life of the university through the metricization of research and, for instance, the increasing use of the word "product" to describe scholarship. Drawing on several articles by Wendy Brown, the authors suggest that "neoliberal governance privileges economic freedoms at the expense of political freedoms as well as democratic values such as universalism, egalitarianism, promotion of an active citizenry, and conceptions of a public good" (20). One of the many original features of *Disciplining the Poor* is the authors' meticulous examination of the ways in which multiple levels of poverty governance now operate from the national level, cascading down a path of decentralization through state-level and local policy designs, most often in conjunction with private market operators, as in the delivery of the TANF program. They demonstrate conclusively that through the complex weaving of the moral surveillance of paternalism and almost total capitalist market-driven neoliberalism, the lives of the poor are disciplined and inhospitably governed. They lay out, as well, the ingredients of contemporary neoliberal paternalism, such as embracing the authority of the activist state while at the same time working to transform it to accord with market principles that are more economically ambitious and expanding

social programs that target the poor. In short, the historically separate domains of the market and the state have now been collapsed into one entity. The authors also deftly explain and analyze the multifarious political and economic forces that created this form of poverty governance, another distinctive feature of the book.

Chapter 3, "The Color of Neoliberal Paternalism," provides an intricate yet readable account of the ways in which race contributes to the structure of poverty governance laid out by neoliberal paternalism. The authors adopt a social constructionist approach for their analysis: race as a cultural force influences poverty governance, and poverty governance in its myriad framings and specific local practices serves as a site that reinforces racial inequality. In order to arrive at a more fine-grained analysis of race and its key role in transforming American poverty governance, they develop an original investigative instrument, the Racial Classification Model of policy choice, to enable them to say with considerable precision how and when racial categories influence and are influenced by poverty governance. This model, which they apply astutely to the Florida case, the authors explain, is rooted in theories of implicit racism and the manner in which racial categorization and judgment are created through cultural discourses that provide shared cognitive frames to structure interpretation and choice.

The second half of the book is a painstaking account of how neoliberal paternalism and race shape poverty governance at local levels in Florida, where "local officials work to convert policy mandates into concrete rules, routines, and administrative actions" (141). Florida was chosen, the authors explain, since it provides a setting where all the distinguishing essentials of neoliberal paternalism in conjunction with race can be observed with considerable clarity. In particular, their field research focuses on the implementation of sanctioning practices in the Florida Welfare Transition Program and the penalties for noncompliance, such as removing the entire TANF family from receiving benefits at the first instance of noncompliance with TANF rules and regulations. Over a 3-year period the authors carried out intensive field research in four of the state's 24 workforce regions by conducting in-depth interviews with state-level officials, regional board members, program supervisors, and case managers. They also attended sanction training workshops for frontline case managers, as well as meetings of region-level staff, and intake and orientation sessions for new Welfare Transition applicants, comprehensively gathering documentary material (memoranda, reports, and web-

sites) for all 24 workforce regions over a 2-year interval. Throughout detailed chapters, the research evidence collected and preserved allows for scrupulous attention being given to local efforts to discipline the poor, to the practice of marketization (privatization of service provision), to performance systems for meeting numerical benchmarks and promoting ever-higher sanction rates, and to the interplay of race and disciplinary procedures. "Our results offer the strongest evidence to date," the authors maintain, "that case managers choices regarding penalties [sanctions] tend to be biased in systematic ways by client race" (259).

This is one of a number of recent books by brilliant social welfare and urban studies scholars who are redefining both disciplines: Robert Fairbanks, *How It Works: Recovering Citizens in Post-Welfare Philadelphia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), and the work by Loic Wacquant mentioned above (*Punishing the Poor*). At several places in the book under review the authors contrast their interpretation of neoliberal paternalism with that of Wacquant's *Punishing the Poor.* Wacquant theorizes that neoliberalism has fashioned a diminishing and disassembling of the social programs of the activist welfare state originating in the 1930s. Penal means of paternalism are in the ascendancy, Wacquant maintains, to contain the perceived disorder and chaos raging in poor black communities and to serve as the principal method of governing poverty. While *Disciplining the Poor* concurs that the carceral state now plays a more prominent role in poverty governance, the book's position is that in juxtaposition "neoliberals have not dismantled the activist state; they have embraced its authority while working to redirect and transform it. In many respects, the neoliberal state is marked by *more* ambitious economic involvements and by *expansions* of social programs that target the poor. Neoliberal reforms have strengthened the state's capacities to serve markets, restructure its operations around market principles, and extended its reach through collaborations with civil society organizations" (6).

In his 1816 poem, "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," Shelley says, "why man has such a scope for love and hate, despondency and hope." The authors' concluding chapter is a hopeful gesture in response to despondency and asks us to reimagine poverty governance. The book provides ample reasons "why people who value justice, care, and democracy should reject the neoliberal-paternalist approach to poverty governance" (301). Privatization has been a disaster producing "a scandalous record of corruption and service failure, enriching corporations and shareholders at the expense

of citizens" (301) as neoliberal paternalism has condemned the poor to dwell on the outer reaches of marginality. In proposing a very different construction of poverty governance, the authors put forward three guiding values, each containing hope for a better future. First, it would promote democracy by allowing the poor to participate in the decisions that structure their lives and have a meaningful voice to contain and restrict the arbitrary use of authority. Second, it would augment social justice by expanding the capacity for self-development and self-determination; to learn skills; and, most important, for the poor to define for themselves the direction and conditions of their lives. Third, considerable value would be allotted to the ethic and practice of care—to give and receive care without fear of further marginalization. Of course to implement these values and to translate them into practice would necessitate the eradication of neoliberal paternalism, a task as daunting as cleaning the Augean stables in a single day.

That Soss, Fording, and Schram were able to shape and sculpt all the massive amounts of data into coherent, elegant chapters is a marvel of engaged and passionate scholarly dedication, and the ethos of their piece is as impressive as the content. Their research—historical, theoretical, and empirical—is impeccable, and breathtakingly they bring all the realms of research together, in the process forging laser-like insight into poverty governance in the contemporary moments of complexity. Both graduate students and faculty in a wide range of disciplines who wish to gain cultural literacy in understanding poverty, race, and its management need to treat this text as priority reading. It will become a classic in the way Piven and Cloward's *Regulating the Poor* did over 40 years ago.

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Design After Decline: How America Rebuilds Shrinking Cities. By Brent D. Ryan. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. Pp. 261. $45.00 (cloth).

In the final chapter of *Design After Decline*, Brent D. Ryan, assistant professor of urban design and public policy at MIT, praises the *urbanismo social* of Medellin, Colombia. From 2003 to 2007, Medellin's government undertook a series of integrated urban projects that merged urban design

with social concerns. Libraries, schools, neighborhood shopping districts, and transit facilities were built to simultaneously service poor neighborhoods and weave them into the physical fabric of the larger city. Architects and planners balanced the functionality and aesthetics that often dominate thinking about the urban environment with society's obligation to care for less fortunate and marginalized populations. Ryan wants urban designers and planners in the United States to act similarly by focusing on the needs of low-income residents in such shrinking cities as Detroit, Buffalo, St. Louis, Cleveland, and Philadelphia.

Of course, Ryan's goal is not new. Over the decades, urban planning and architecture have had an off-and-on relationship with social policy. Urban planning and social work both originated as part of the Progressive Era efforts to address the slums, poverty, and pestilence of the industrial cities. Throughout the twentieth century, architects flirted with social housing, which has its roots in the European welfare states. During the 1960s, both urban planning and architecture were swept up in President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty; planners engaged in various forms of social and advocacy planning, and architects worked out of storefronts to engage the residents of low-income neighborhoods. More recently, though, this civic ethos has waned. Urban planners have become enamored with transit-oriented, multiuse, dense neighborhoods for the middle (and creative) class while architects have rediscovered iconic buildings.

Ryan sees an opportunity to reinvigorate the social responsibility inherent to these professions in cities that have experienced decades of population and job loss. These cities are now burdened with block after block of abandoned housing, acres of vacant and unmarketable land, severe fiscal difficulties, and resident populations of mainly low-income and minority households. The goal for urban design, a melding of architecture and planning, is to reappropriate modernism's utopian impulse and commit itself to social justice. The attenuation of those values and the potential for re-engagement are the twin themes of *Design After Decline*.

Two cases ground the book's argument, those of Detroit and of Philadelphia. For each, Ryan describes how city governments attempted to combat population loss by building low-density, small-scale residential projects for low- and lower-middle-income households. Political distaste for the big, monolithic projects (e.g., Minneapolis's Cedar-Riverside "new town" of the 1970s) championed by modernism, anemic real estate values that repelled private developers, and low demand for middle-income and

wealthy housing made it nearly impossible for these cities to attempt large-scale reconstruction. Detroit and Philadelphia thus proceeded cautiously and with new construction heavily subsidized by government.

What bothers Ryan is the tendency for shrinking cities, cities faced with low demand and cheap land, to pursue suburban-style residential developments. In adopting this approach, these cities embrace the model of urban design exemplified by Charlotte Gardens in the Bronx, with its detached single-family homes and white picket fences. Fully occupied and with homes that have risen significantly in value over the years, this project is widely considered a success. Ryan, however, deems it an unacceptable response to the needs of shrinking cities. He prefers an urbanism in which the automobile is less dominant, believing that density encourages social interaction and minimizes land and construction costs to make housing affordable and that vibrant public spaces signal that this is a city and not a suburban subdivision.

Ryan is not alone in thinking about these issues, but he is skeptical of what others have proposed. He rejects the everyday urbanism of small-scale projects (e.g., community gardens and pop-up playgrounds) as too limited in scope. He finds landscape urbanism's "greening" of the city to be deaf to the needs of low-income populations, insufficiently attentive to affordable housing, and too dependent on strong government and deep-pocket investors, both of which are absent in shrinking cities. And he dismisses New Urbanism for its failure to sever its ties with the single-family detached home and the suburban subdivision site plan. None of these approaches addresses urban policy at the citywide scale. The absence of an overarching vision is one of the lamentable consequences of opportunistic development projects.

A social urbanism that could improve the lives of residents in shrinking cities, Ryan argues, would consist of five principles. First, it would be modest and engage in a palliative planning that recognizes that any intervention can only alleviate and not reverse negative trends. Second, intervention must involve federal support, concerted local planning, and integrated municipal policy. Third, rebuilding in these cities should focus on helping the poor while dispersing new development across distressed areas in order to achieve greater citywide equity and minimize displacement. Fourth, social urbanism must be responsive to resident concerns and be projective. Projective design searches for cohesive and coherent urban images, knits together the neighborhood visually and functionally, and

aspires to environmental sustainability. Finally, he makes a case for a patchwork urbanism that confronts the fragmented physical landscape of a shrinking city by offering designs that knit still-viable areas into a variegated but cohesive urban fabric.

Elected officials and planners in shrinking cities are struggling with how to rethink the city as smaller. Ryan concurs and reiterates the unavoidable physical dimension of the problem: abandoned housing has to be demolished, vacant land managed, and new construction undertaken. Accomplishing these tasks in a piecemeal fashion, though, makes the city less viable as an urban space.

Ryan makes a significant contribution to urban design and planning by turning this critique into realizable plans. Lost in his proposal, however, is the social policy and integrated development that he so admired in Medellin. Neither the projects he praises in Philadelphia nor the example of Oldham's Walk he takes from Covent Gardens in London brings together housing with such social services as libraries and day-care centers or takes into account the connections between where people live and how they obtain the public and private services that enable them to prosper. Housing is not the only social need that people have (on this point, and for urban planning, see *Overlooked America*, by the editors of *Planning Magazine* [Chicago: Planners Press, 2008]). For housing to serve that purpose, moreover, it has to be integrated into an infrastructure of social supports that are well planned, well designed, and properly situated in the landscape. For people to live well together, they need to have cities that integrate homes with services, jobs, public spaces, and transportation options, and which do so in ways that are supportive and accessible. Social urbanism is only a beginning.

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Tax and Spend: The Welfare State, Tax Politics, and the Limits of American Liberalism. By Molly C. Michelmore. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. Pp. 243. $39.95 (cloth).

In *Tax and Spend*, historian Molly C. Michelmore offers an impressive political and policy history of post–New Deal tax and social policy debates in the United States. In her words, "taxes and tax talk dominate domestic

policymaking" (1). Michelmore focuses specifically on two policy instruments: the federal income tax and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), now Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) per the 1996 welfare reform effort. As for cash assistance policy, the author clearly shows that the AFDC program was never large or costly; by 1994, 2 years prior to the federal welfare overhaul, it amounted to less than 2 percent of the entire social welfare budget and an even smaller share of total federal discretionary spending. Michelmore's most important contribution is to lay out how the political semantics of taxes and welfare allowed willful policy makers to craft a narrative that portrayed middle-class Americans as "victims of a tax code" whose benefits went only to an underserving poor (98).

Presented as a chronological policy history, *Tax and Spend* traces the political development of the "tax and welfare state" (19) from its origins in the Great Depression through the end of the Reagan revolution of the 1980s. Michelmore's central thesis is what she identifies as the basic paradox of contemporary American politics, that "Americans hate government, but demand and expect, almost as a matter of right, the privileges, security, and mobility that government offers" (2–3). Michelmore, whose findings are based on in-depth archival research as well as a range of secondary (and interdisciplinary) literature, shows how the visibility and political vulnerability of welfare (i.e., AFDC) "stand in stark contrast to the invisibility and relative security of much of what might be called the middle-class welfare state" (3), like the earmarked payroll taxes for Social Security and Medicare and tax expenditures. Indeed, though the imperative for both Democrats and Republicans alike is to balance promises to protect the rights and interests of ordinary taxpayers with other policy priorities, both parties have reinforced long-held political beliefs about welfare spending "disproportionate to its size or its cost to the average taxpayer" (3). Ultimately, the book is really more about the political narrative of tax and welfare politics rather than the origins and development of the tax and welfare state.

I want to dig a bit deeper in order to highlight some of the most important findings of Michelmore's well-crafted policy history and call attention to some key aspects missing from her story, both chronologically and thematically. Michelmore promises us a book that illuminates the "contours of contemporary American politics in their historic context by tracing the complicated and interlocking relationships between the Amer-

ican taxing and welfare states in the twentieth century" (150–51). This is a very tall order. I believe her most significant contribution is the close examination of the contested politics of taxes and welfare policy since the New Deal, as her focus relates most directly to reductions in federal income tax rates and the reform of the AFDC program. However, the tax and welfare state occupies a broad governing space that cannot be understood by focusing narrowly on tax rates and traditional social spending programs.

Michelmore argues in chapter 1 that New Deal and World War II tax and welfare policy acknowledged the federal government's responsibility to provide Americans with a degree of economic security (old-age pensions, unemployment insurance) and to incorporate the majority of citizens into the state as taxpayers through earmarked payroll taxes. Chapter 2 shows how these policy institutions and ideological commitments formed in the New Deal and, during WWII and the immediate postwar period, "informed and constrained" what Michelmore classifies as "liberal tax and spending policy" over the following decades (15). She attempts to show how faith in Keynesian economics limited the ability of liberals to respond to changes in domestic and international political economy and further undermined popular support for the "activist state" (15). Chapters 3 and 4 detail what Michelmore calls the "collapse of the New Deal order" and the rise of a new tax-reduction politics embraced by Republicans in the 1970s (15). *Tax and Spend* concludes with an analysis of the tax and spending policies that represent the Reagan revolution of the 1980s and shaped current-day conservative politics in the United States. Michelmore ends with a suggestion of how the tax and welfare politics that have unfolded since the New Deal continue to shape federal income tax and social policy and define American politics.

Michelmore's *Tax and Spend* makes an important contribution to a range of recent work by policy-oriented historians and political scientists working on the origins and development of the welfare state in the United States. However, by focusing only on major tax rate reductions, implemented by both Kennedy and Reagan (and later Bush in the early 2000s), and on only one social policy, AFDC, Michelmore pays far too little attention to the origins and development of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and its unique contribution to tax and welfare politics in the United States. The EITC is now the nation's largest antipoverty program. Moreover, an important bipartisan middle-group consensus in American

politics has emerged around the EITC, the popularity of which can be attributed to the EITC's provision of both work incentives and income tax relief. Michelmore is too quick to dismiss the EITC, suggesting that although the refundable EITC and by extension the partially refundable Child Tax Credit may have "salutary effects on the economic well-being of individuals and families, they do little to enhance the reputation of the activist state" (158).

While Michelmore might have a personal preference for an activist welfare state delivered through direct spending, the millions of families and children who received a boost in their paychecks (and less of a regressive federal payroll tax burden) have no objections to this important element of what Chris Howard called the "hidden welfare state" (*The Hidden Welfare State: Tax Expenditures and Social Policy in the United States* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997]). As I argue in *Boosting Paychecks: The Politics of Supporting America's Working Poor Families* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2009), in addition to simple tax rate reductions for all Americans, the trio of federal individual income tax provisions—personal exemptions, standard deductions, and refundable tax credits—together can shelter a certain amount of earned wages from federal tax liability and thus increase the amount of take-home pay of low-wage workers and their families.

Politically, at both the federal and state levels, the current and (an expanded) EITC can simultaneously embody both progressive and conservative values by rewarding those who work with an earnings subsidy; providing the greatest benefits to those with the greatest need; offsetting the tax burden on working-poor single and childless married couples struggling to make ends meet; providing incentives for people to enter the workforce who otherwise might not do so; achieving these ends without increasing employer costs, without creating hiring disincentives, and with minimal government bureaucracy.

Democrats have raised distributional and fairness concerns in recent tax policy reform debates. As part of large congressional reconciliation tax-cut packages, EITC expansions have been used to maintain distributional equity for tax policy reform as a whole. The EITC expansions in the 1980s, 1990, and 1993 were successful in offsetting the regressive effects of increases in payroll taxes and in gasoline, alcohol, and tobacco excise taxes for low-income workers with children. And over these decades,

there has not been any major retrenchment to the refundable EITC: in fact, we saw expansion and important support from the employer community.

Furthermore, Michelmore concludes that the EITC has done nothing to “create politically powerful constituencies interested in its survival or expansion” (158). This conclusion is debatable to say the least. Chris Howard (1997) concludes that the meteoric rise of the EITC over its first 2 decades indicates that it is possible to build a durable bipartisan political coalition on behalf of means-tested programs that support low-income and working-poor families in the United States. Similarly, Bob Greenstein, director of the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, concluded that the EITC’s policy design—“a middle ground of maintaining a targeted program structure while incorporating near-poor and moderate-income working families that are struggling themselves”—has strengthened its underlying political support (“Universal and *Targeted* Approaches to Relieving Poverty: An Alternative View,” in *The Urban Underclass*, edited by Christopher Jencks and Paul E. Peterson [Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1991], 437–49, 450). While targeted programs are indeed more likely to be strong politically when they serve low-income to more moderate-income people as well as the very poor, Greenstein also notes that a range of targeted federal programs that have also proved sustainable over time (i.e., EITC, Medicaid, SCHIP, food stamps and SNAP, Supplemental Security Income) “supports the idea that if the public considers benefits to be earned, or strongly approves of the services being provided, political strength can be sustained among targeted means-tested programs” (447).

In sum, Michelmore’s *Tax and Spend* is an important contribution to a range of scholarship that illuminates (and expresses disappointment about) our less-than-active and underdeveloped welfare state. *Tax and Spend* is an important story for all those disappointed by the limits of American liberalism. For those who are preparing for today’s and tomorrow’s political battles over social policy, however, it’s time to write a new chapter in the tax versus welfare story. Examples over the past 3 decades demonstrate how Republicans and Democrats alike have found their way around gridlocked policy debates over direct spending to enact bipartisan tax credits that increase income security and improve access to child care, higher education, and other social goods. The ensuing revenue loss and budget outlays represent important sources of federal spending to support working-

poor families, with important geographic implications for the communities in which they live and work.

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Killing with Kindness: Haiti, International Aid, and NGOs. Mark Schuller. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012. Pp. 256. $72.00 (cloth); $26.95 (paper).

This ethnographic and sociopolitical study, set in Haiti during the 2004 coup and its aftermath and extending until just beyond the 2010 catastrophic earthquake, is crafted by a professor of African American Studies and Anthropology at York College of City University of New York. Mark Schuller has an impressive ability to carry the reader from the micro-individual level of two devoted Haitian activists of separate nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to the national historical, political, social, economic, and cultural environment of Haitians collectively, and ultimately to the international and global macro realm, at which level he describes and critiques the forces and organizations operating in Haiti. The progression of his analysis is largely chronological, interspersed with first-person accounts, and he carefully elucidates Haiti's modern political history. The bulk of Schuller's work was conducted before the 2010 Haiti quake, though the disaster is discussed briefly in the introduction, the conclusion, and in a few parts of interior chapters. The study makes obvious why post-quake NGO aid has been so difficult to do both in the context of Haiti today and given the current environment of international humanitarian assistance.

The book is a running and comprehensive comparative examination of two Haitian NGOs, each manifesting different organizational structures and styles, each dependent on different types of donors, and each with different methods and tactics in providing humanitarian aid to the Haitian people. Both NGOs administer and distribute development aid. However, the author demonstrates that the success, failure, or mixed results achieved by each NGO at various times is influenced in large part (but not exclusively) by the behavior, motives, and patience of outside donors: some of them individual governments, some collective multinational gov-

ernmental entities (sometimes banks), some semiprivate corporate or foundational charities powerful enough to work alone or through government foreign assistance agencies, and others purely private (corporations and contractors) or nonprofit (altruistic organizations, many of them serving various religious causes and denominations). Sove Lavi and Fanm Tet Ansanm are the two Haitian NGOs at the heart of the study. The former is very much top-down, bureaucratically centralized, and highly dependent on USAID funding, which comes intermittently, in wildly vacillating amounts, and with reporting conditions reflecting the social values and proclivities of various presidential administrations over time. Sove Lavi, as Schuller reveals, has difficulties securing local buy-in because it is not grassroots in its methods, though the organization does make meaningful contributions to the people of Haiti in some of its programs and activities. Schuller discloses that the organization was founded as a "utility of the Haitian government" (114). In contrast, Fanm Tet Ansanm, largely funded through an arm of the European Union, has more freedom to act and more patience in striving for long-term results. It is a long-operating NGO with roots in the labor movement that relies heavily on local collaboration in what it undertakes. Schuller gives both NGOs equal coverage but praises Fanm Tet Ansanm more than Sove Lavi for achieving somewhat better outcomes. Neither Haitian NGO is well resourced nor is either smooth running.

Because Schuller, unlike many scholars studying specific developing nations, has actually lived in his target nation for many months to years as he conducted his field research, he is able to supplement his research with rich description. He has made successive visits to Haiti over the past 10 years and is fluent in Kreyol and French, thus providing him entrée with the Haitians he meets, interviews, and observes. The study delivers engaging personal accounts of two women, both Haitian NGO activists: Marie-Ange of Sove Lavi's Community Action Councils and Giselle of Fanm Tet Ansanm. At the time she was interviewed, Marie-Ange was a divorced single mother in her mid-50s, who dedicated her life to service. Giselle was a former factory worker and mother of several children. Struggling to pay for her education, she eventually served in a network of public health volunteers, AIDS peer educators, and in neighborhood associations. Each gave Schuller an extraordinary vantage point from which to investigate and observe. The struggles, heroic efforts, and experiences of Marie-Ange and Giselle, as well as others interviewed, carry the study forward as an

ethnography and as a social service policy analysis informed by grassroots activism.

Schuller himself claims that people observing Haiti from the outside tend to categorize it as a basket case when it comes to economic and political advancement. Many of these people would like to know how and if they could offer meaningful and efficacious humanitarian aid to the people of this seriously disadvantaged nation. Schuller's book parachutes its readers into Haiti and guides them through the full context of Haiti's predicament. He does not hold Haiti and its government blameless, but he does maintain that many of Haiti's problems have been at first a function of early eighteenth- and nineteenth-century economic imperialism, later US Monroe Doctrine and cold war exploitation and manipulation, and more recently the result of neoliberalism and "democratic (and trickle down) imperialism" (21–22). Schuller defines neoliberalism as Reaganomics or of late "Tea Party" politics, both of which assume government is "big bureaucracy" with excesses that tend to make it corrupt and ineffective (8). American neoliberalism advocates cut foreign aid with pressures on poor nations, such as Haiti, to reduce import tariffs, which Schuller says are in place to protect their few indigenous agricultural and industrial activities. He claims that most humanitarian organizations outside of government had escaped this criticism until the earthquake of 2010.

As a researcher of disaster management (see Richard Sylves, *Disaster Policy and Politics* [Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2008]), I was disappointed that so little of the work directly addressed the Haiti earthquake of 2010, recovery from this event, and how the full realm of humanitarian assistance in Haiti may have changed, or been unchanged, by the disaster. My criticism may be tempered because Schuller and Pablo Morales published an edited work entitled *Tectonic Shifts: Haiti since the Earthquake* (Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2012), which does examine the disaster and ensuing relief assistance, much of it by NGOs.

The title *Killing with Kindness* implies that the disjointedness of humanitarian aid, along with the differences between donors and recipients in values, economic class, cultures, language, and religions, and the awkwardness and insensitivity in aid distribution methods undermine the altruistic efforts of aid providers. This cumulative failure has deadly consequences for some of the many hundreds of thousands of Haitians who barely survive from one day to the next. Schuller paints a sad picture of Haiti's government corruption and incompetence. He shows how Haiti's

government is regularly undermined by outside NGOs and conditions of foreign government humanitarian aid whenever it attempts reforms. Many of these visiting NGO organizations, though well meaning, become intrusive bodies that create geographic spheres of jurisdiction independent of, and unhelpful to, the Haiti national government and its people generally. Schuller ends his study by offering his prescriptive policy solutions, and students of humanitarian assistance are guaranteed an eye-opening experience. His analysis painstakingly demonstrates the conditions and challenges facing the two Haitian NGOs, and he chronicles how humanitarian aid succeeds or fails in Haiti. Schuller's message is not one of fatalism or resignation but rather a spirited call for do-gooders to take on their work with a sophisticated appreciation of the social, political, economic, cultural, and historical environment in which NGO humanitarian assistance and development aid is rendered.

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Brief Notices

NEW AND UPCOMING TITLES OF INTEREST TO SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL WELFARE SCHOLARS

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